CAMERACRAFT

MAY/JUNE 2025 • EDITION #64 • £10 • ISSN 2514-0167

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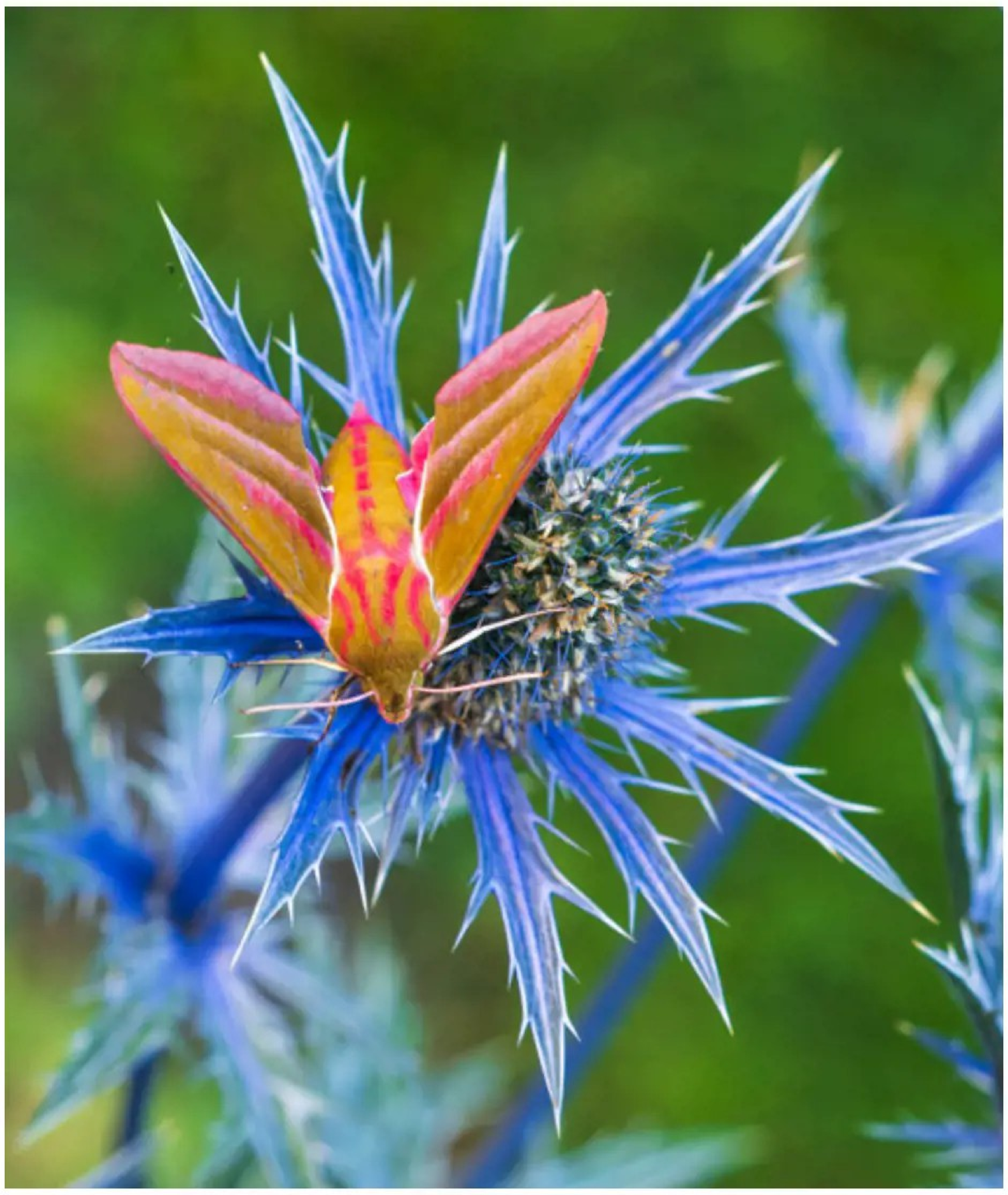

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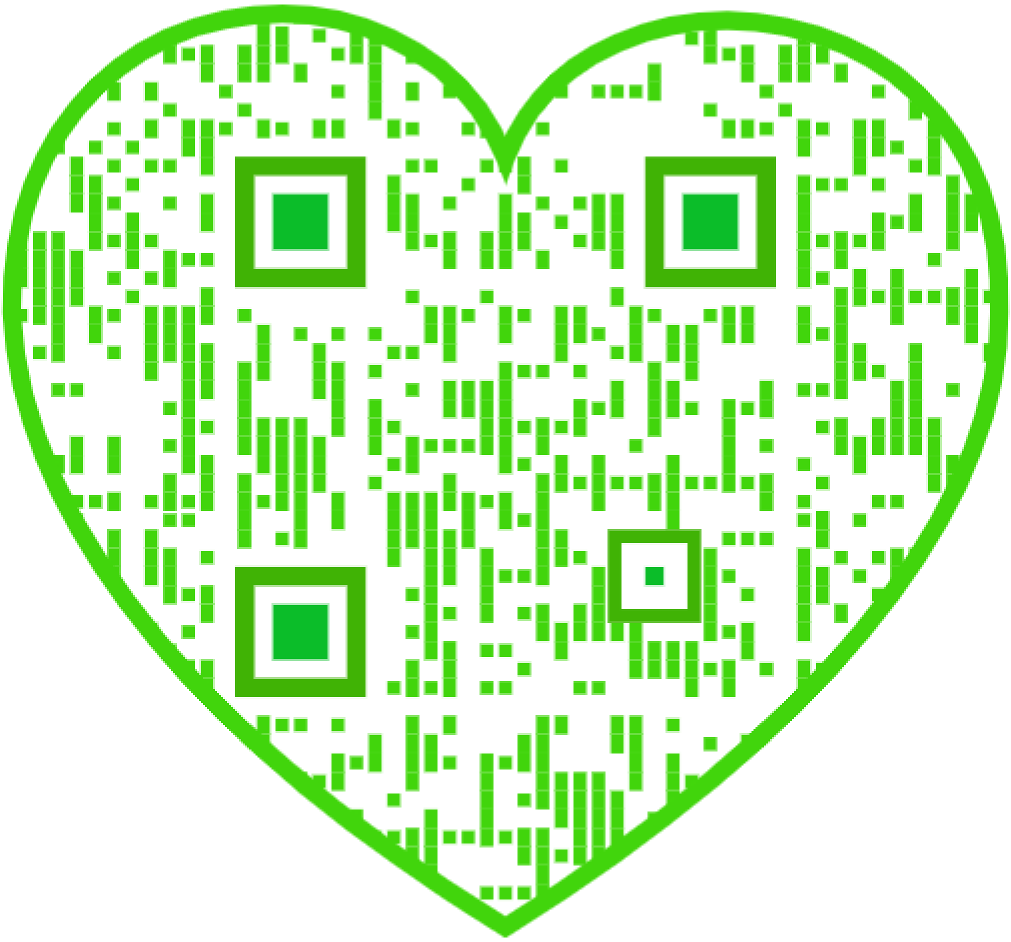

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For this magazine, the correct choices are Magazine printing, Colour, Portrait orientation, A4 size, 130gsm Silk paper, stapled, 48 pages, no additional cover. The screen shot *(right)* shows this set up. It was made on April 29th and would, if a copy had been ordered then, have given May 7th estimated delivery time.

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CAMERACRAFT
Year 1 2012-13 • Issues 1 to 4

Left: a 2012-2015 digitaly printed compendium.
Centre: March/April as originally printed. Right: March/April from Mixam.

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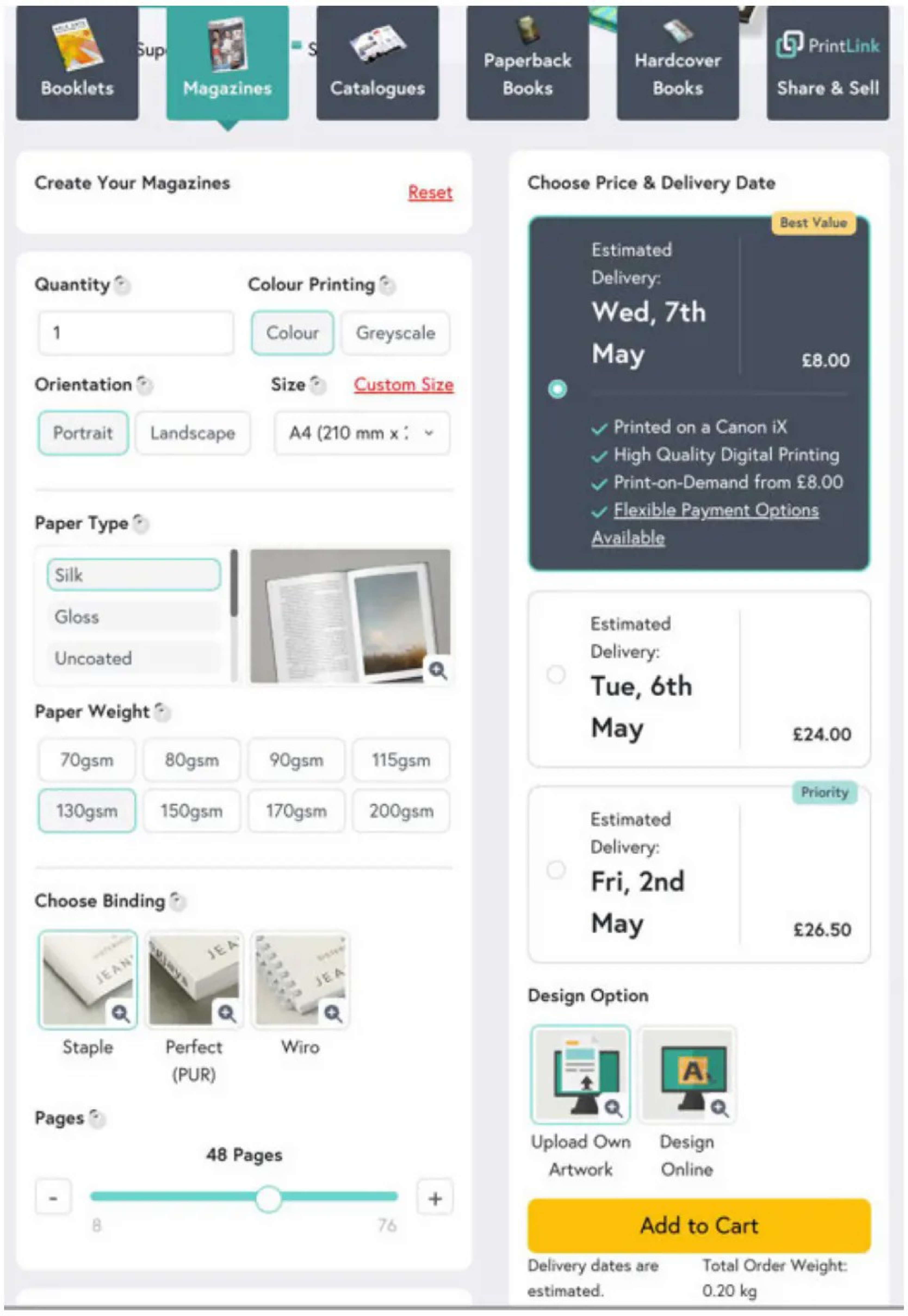

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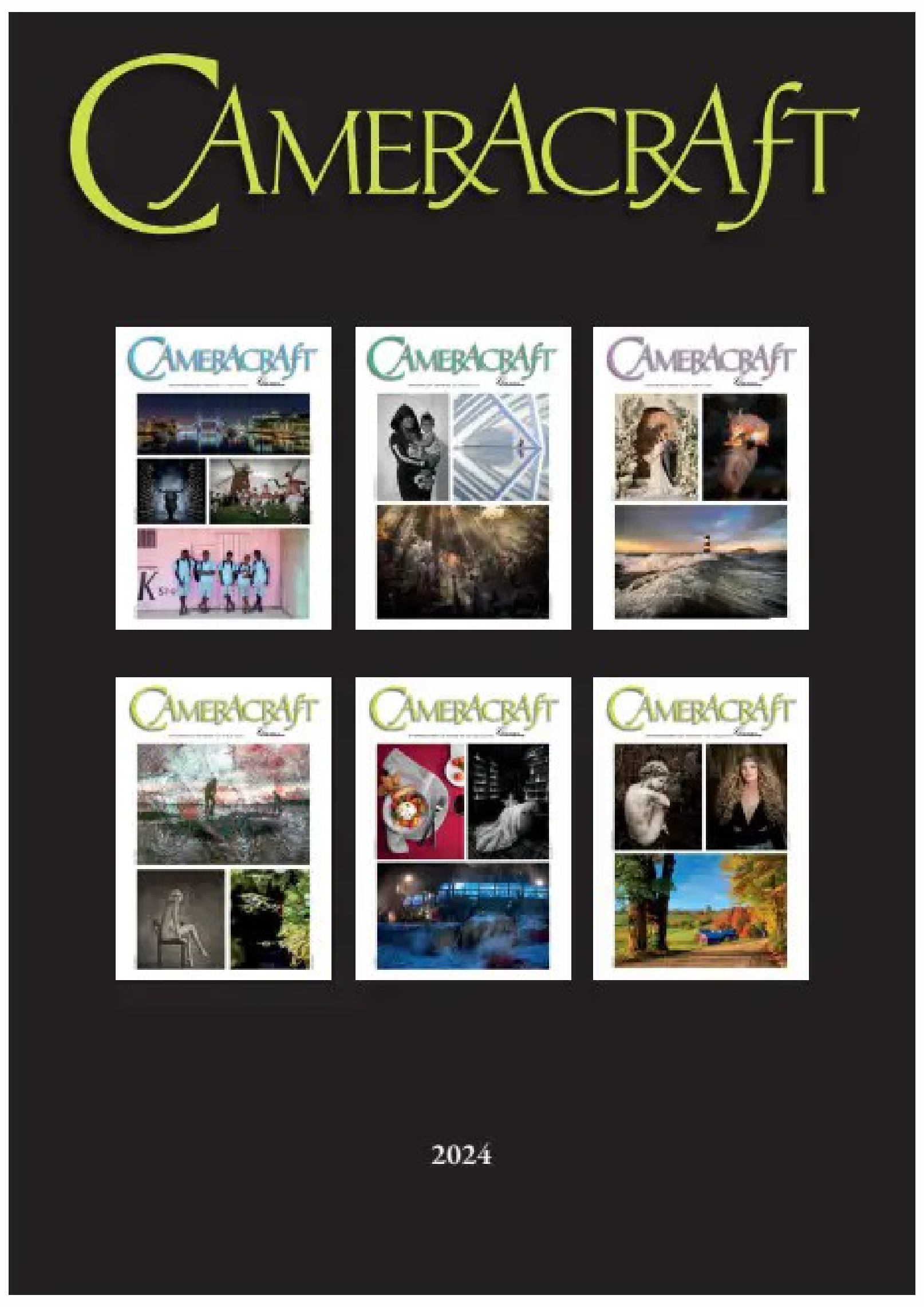

Go buy the book!

By far the best way to have printed copies of *Cameracraft* is to take all six issues from a year and make them into a book.

We've done this for you as the resulting combined file is tricky to assemble, and you will be able to order a copy using our **PrintLink** directly from Mixam UK., for £38.25 plus carriage.

This is a perfect-bound gloss laminated paperback (cover above). We first had one of these made – at much greater expense in the early days of digital print on demand – for the *Cameracraft* first series issues, 2012-2015 (see photo top). It takes up a fraction of the bookshelf space used for binders and for our archives all the past editions will be reprinted in this form. Coming soon, see cameracraft.online for back issue volumes!

You may be surprised to find that your digital edition of *Cameracraft* has the same format as the the earlier editions when I had proposed that it might change to a phone and tablet friendly design and size which could be easier to produce. Retaining the A4 design means that it is possible, at a price, to print copies to exactly the same standard as our previous press run. As publisher, I can do this to fulfil a small number of subscriptions such as university libraries and the statutory Libraries of Deposit. It also makes it possible for subscribers to order a printed copy, at any time, if they wish. This can be produced anywhere in the world, and the general cost of good quality digital printing in the USA including postage to the reader is lower than the postage cost alone of mailing a magazine from Britain.

So why not stay in print?

The reason is all to do with numbers. While we have several hundred digital subscribers, including those moved from former print subs, we don't have the minimum number needed by Royal Mail to secure Subscription Mail 2 posting. This bulk service cuts the cost of second class post for this size of magazine only by over 65%. Combined with keeping the magazine weight under 250g, it enabled me to keep sending out to the Guild of Photographers' UK addresses at a charge to them which more or less matched their saving in VAT due. Magazines form a zero rated part of any such subscription, while the rest is VAT rated. This is how most associations budget for their printed magazines.

The downside is that to secure this, the cover price of a magazine has to high, making it unlikely to sell on the open retail news market unless it is made far more substantial. The increased print and postage cost of an 80 or 96 page magazine – which we were once able to produce with the support of a modest level of affordable advertising space – makes this now unviable.

I can only offer sympathy to the publishers of *Professional Photo*, which the last surviving printed news-stand pro title in the UK market, who have taken the step of switching to digital publication and blog or newsletter supplements. They have made the change at the same time we have been obliged to.

How can *Cameracraft* survive?

The future may lie in a mix of your own subscriptions and publication on a number of different digital page-turn and download platforms. We have in the past published on ISSUU but found difficulty reconciling accessibility and subscription cost. No-one wants to create a magazine and not have it widely read, and that only happens if it is free. My preferred solution is to have a low resolution version free to read on-line and a subscription payment for a much higher resolution download which can be saved and kept. A one-off payment to a third party digital print service will allow printed copy ordering from this high res version.

I'm already planning to recycle all the many hundreds of file copies of printed magazines since the early 2000s after giving as many as possible away to clubs, colleges or retail stores which still have customer footfall.

Cameracraft direct subscriptions now include the right to print your own copy, whether selected pages on your own printer, or a full facsimile ordered from a digital print service.

On the facing inside front cover you'll find all the info needed to order a printed copy if you want one. If you are a subscriber and want a high-res PDF for a back issue, email to request a press-ready PDF and I'll send a link to download.

– David Kilpatrick *Email: editor@iconpublications.com*

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Anna Arendt, Andrew Fusek Peters, Tim Burgess, Stuart Wood, Tom Hill, David Kilpatrick, Gary Friedman.

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CAMERACRAFT
#64, Vol 10 No 1
MAY/JUNE 2025

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Cameracraft has been published in print six times a year from March/April 2018 to March/April 2025, after dropping the *ƒ*2 from its title, added after merging the original *Cameracraft* (2012-2015) with *ƒ*2. The magazine is now published as a high resolution PDF edition for subscribers and on magazine platforms, with a low resolution page-turn version available free on the website. A limited run of printed copies is also made, and subscribers are authorised to order digital printed copies (see inside front cover). Through previous titles *Freelance Photographer*, *Photon* and *PHOTOpro* it is the latest in a line of photographic magazines published from Kelso by David Kilpatrick since 1989.

ISSN 2514-0167

FREE BACK ISSUES of *Cameracraft* and *ƒ2 Cameracraft*: we are moving premises due to ho use sale, after 37 years at Maxwell Place. It will not be possible to transfer the stock of back issues, or continue listing printed back issues for sale. Before these are consigned to recycling you are welcome to collect any/all free.

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Tamron 18-300mm now for Z and RF

TAMRON is now producing the all-in-one Tamron zoom lens 18-300mm ƒ3.5-6.3 Di III-A1 VC VXD (Model B061) for Nikon Z mount and Canon RF mount APS-C mirrorless cameras, as well as the original models made for Sony and Fuji X. This was the world's first lens to achieve a zoom ratio of 16.6x when it was released in 2021. It is ideal for a wide range of scenes, including landscapes, snapshots, portraits, animals, macro, and sports. It focuss down to 15cm at its wide-angle end, and the maximum magnification ratio is 1:2 (half life-size). Ituss the premium Tamron VXD (Voice-coil eXtreme-torque Drive) AF and VC (Vibration Compensation) image stabilisation. The lens is not yet listed by dealers but the existing models cost £529. It is Tamron's second RF lens.

www.tamron.co.uk

Talks at roadshows – the zero cost way to learn new skills

THE SOCIETY of Photographers' series of free-to-enter photographic roadshows across the UK, running from April to September 2025, has three dates in May you can attend in the north, east and west Midlands.

Each roadshow starting at 09:30, will feature three free Masterclasses led by renowned photographic educators, covering topics such as lighting techniques, business strategies, and inspirational storytelling. Attendees will have the chance to learn from an impressive lineup of speakers, including Alex Denham, Oliver Wheeldon, Gary Hill, Scott Johnson, Kelly Brown, Simon Burfoot, Mr Whisper (Balwinder Bhatla), Rebecca Douglas, Jeff Brown, and Luke Davis.

The accompanying trade shows will showcase top photographic companies, allowing attendees to explore the latest equipment, software, and services. Exhibiting brands include Fujifilm, Sony, Canon, Elinchrom, Permajet, Click Backdrops, Camera Centre UK, Loxley Colour, The Society of Photographers, Bump2Baby, and Professional Imagemaker. Manufacturers will also be offering exclusive show deals for attendees.

The upcoming dates and venues as we go to press are:

Tuesday 13th May – Wetherby Racecourse, Wetherby

Wednesday 14th May – Colwick Hall, Nottingham

Thursday 15th May – Bank House Hotel, Spa & Golf Club, Worcester

Planning ahead, there are shows further south:

Tuesday 16th September – Webbington Hotel & Spa, Somerset

Wednesday 17th September – Green Park Conference Centre, Reading

Thursday 18th September – Priestfield Stadium, Kent

See:

www.thesocieties.net/roadshows

Samyang compact 14-24mm ƒ2.8 FE AF first to use regular filters

COLLABORATING with German optical legends Schneider, Samyang has introduced a full frame 14-24mm ƒ2.8 FE lens which is very compact and unlike past designs allows the use of 77mm filters. This AF design is sized to suit the compact Sony A7C series as well as larger bodies, with a weight of only 445g and extended just 88.8mm from the body.

It will focus down to 18cm and features one custom switch and button, designed for both still and movie uses. Schneider-Kreuznach's contribution is said to be optical while South Korean Samyang provide the mechanical and construction expertise.

The RRP is over £1,000 so it's not a budget lens, and we look forward to trying it out.

www.holdan.co.uk/samyang

WEX: https://tidd.ly/42SmzvT

Canon's budget RF 75-300mm full frame

ATY ONLY £289 you would expect the new Canon tele zoom to be APS-C – but it's full frame for all R models. Lightweight 507g construction just 146.1mm long houses a Super Spectra coated zoom which can focus down to 1.5m at 300mm – this is not a major achievement, it's actually very much what every entry level 75-300mm has offered for years if you ignore Tamron and Sigma focusing down to half life size with a macro range and Sony (at four times this price) getting down to 0.9m with continuous AF. It has an AF/MF switch, a 7-blade aperture, and takes 58mm filters.

www.canon.co.uk

Pre-order from WEX: https://tidd.ly/4lVlnR9

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2025 UPCOMING EVENTS

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14 May – Nottinghamshire
15 May – Worcestershire

16 September – Somerset
17 September – Berkshire
18 September – Kent

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TOM HILL

Sun, Sicily and social media – the best and worst of life in a fortnight's holiday

Tom Hill is a travel writer, copywriter and sometime photographer living in the Scottish Borders in the UK.

Tom's book 'The Cobbler's Children' on his 40 years in imaging raises funds for the British Heart Foundation – see **bigfrogsmallpond.co.uk**

In 1958, one of the most important novels in Italian literature was published posthumously by the estate of Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa. The book was called *The Leopard (Il Gattopardo)*. It describes changes in Sicilian life during the 'risorgimento' (reunification of Italy) during the late 1860s.

One masterful quote from the work neatly summarises my recent experience of touring Sicily:

"Nowhere has truth so short a life as in Sicily; a fact has scarcely happened five minutes before its genuine kernel has vanished, been camouflaged, embellished, disfigured, squashed, annihilated by imagination and self-interest; shame, fear, generosity, malice, opportunism, charity, all the passions, good as well as evil, fling themselves onto the fact and tear it to pieces; very soon it has vanished altogether."

That's the thing about Sicily, it's an island of extremes. The most obvious example is when driving on Sicilian roads. Whether in the open countryside or the centre of Palermo, the inherent danger is simply a matter of degree.

Sicilian driving is like being on dodgem cars at the funfair. Everyone is unconcerned as to what, or who, they collide with. Sicilian drivers seem to be on an amphetamine-fuelled rush to hoot aggressively at the next vehicle ahead if the object of their ire fails to move within a microsecond. Yet, when not behind the wheel, many Sicilians are amongst the politest and most gracious people I've encountered.

Another joy of driving a rental car in Italy is that the cops have a statute of limitations of one full year *(sic)* to issue a speeding ticket after you might have inadvertently tripped a speed camera or not noticed a ZTL zone sign, where only residents' and local businesses' cars are allowed along given streets in certain towns.

The whole scheme is a licence to print money, funded by tourists. You can be sitting back home 11 months after a road trip through Italy, and out of the blue, you might receive a letter demanding payment of a €400 fine (or more). If you ignore the communications, the issuing authority sells the debt to a UK collection agency. Nice.

POLIZIA MUNICIPALE
COMUNE DI SAN VITO LO CAPO

Clearly, native Sicilians must just ignore the fines (or the authorities only chase renters) because if you try driving at the 50kmh limit anywhere, you'll get a local car three centimetres from your rear bumper with full horn and flashing lights for good measure.

The itinerary

This two-week trip was my third to Sicily. The previous two visits had been in my own UK plated, 20-year-old, RH drive Land Rover Defender 90. In that vehicle, I rarely encountered the honking and vehicular gladiatorial shenanigans that I suffered in our tiny rented Fiat Panda. Go figure.

Flying into Catania, we performed a mainly coastal loop of the island, clockwise via Syracuse, Agrigento, Porta di Licata, Marsala, San Vito lo Capo, Palermo, then back to Catania. I tried to avoid main roads when possible. The results produced some cracking roadside and urban pictures, but I gained several loosened teeth fillings from the Fiat's suspension.

The food in Sicily is stunning. You won't find poor quality comestibles in any establishment, from a street corner deli to a Michelin-starred restaurant, everything on offer is perfect and delicious.

I find it the height of rudeness to pull out a phone in a dining room and take a picture of one's perfectly presented primo. Consequently, there are no 'plate pictures' featured here. I did stretch to the odd phone-snap sunset when sitting outside a pavement café or two. The rest of the photos I took are typical of my style; often described by my friends as 'inaccessible' or 'excessively angular'. Judge for yourself.

Stepping out of an evening requires a *de rigueur* jacket, shirt and chinos at the very least for a man. Almost all Italians look immaculate all of the time, whether sauntering to the beach with a gelato in one hand (and a phone in the other), or popping into the local *tabacchi* for an espresso, a Peroni or grappa.

One thing I learned in Sicilian restaurants is not to make mafia-related jokes. In the UK, especially in Italian restaurants, when it comes to trying the wine before the waiter pours the first two glasses, they always assume that the male of a heterogenous couple should try that first eggcup-sized splash to seek approval of the product. I always pointedly pass the glass to my female partner. She tries the wine, either nodding or (occasionally) grimacing, and the game commences. At this point, I often say to the waiter:

"Il capo dei tutti capi…"

It's supposed to mean that she's the boss, and I merely the poor sod who drives the car and puts the bins out. It usually raises a laugh. It didn't last week in Syracuse. Quite the reverse. The waiter walked off, shaking his head, looking like I'd made that joke about Italian tanks in WW2 having six reverse gears and one forward.

Blinded by the light

In 2013, a BBC documentary about David Bailey featured him photographing Kate Moss for some top fashion magazine. One of the interviewers looked at an image he'd produced and said something like: 'That's stunning, how do you capture this stuff? What's the secret?'

Bailey replied with his usual laconic frankness:

"Well, if you can't get fantastic photos of a woman who looks this good, it's time to f***ing pack up and go home – whoever you are…".

The same could be said of Sicilian light. If you can't produce memorable, perfectly exposed and saturated photos of anything from roadside Catholic shrines via urban graffiti to olive groves or beach huts, then you shouldn't be using a camera. I managed to capture a mixture of street photography, religious rites, stray cats (obligatory) and cheesy seascapes.

Top left, in Ortigia. Bottom let, police box in San Vito. Contrasts on the road – from the top, abandoned countryside building, architecture in Marsala, a ruggedly volcanic cove, and an Easter vigil.

The sun in mid-April in Sicily is often not only strong (at least for Brits – the locals are still in coats and scarves at 24°) but the quality of illumination is stunning. I found that a combination of one third of a stop under exposure, generally, with a fill-in flash set two stops under 'normal' produced the best saturation on a Canon DSLR without burning out any highlights.

Unfortunately, when blinded by strong sunlight in a field somewhere near Agrigento, I pressed the wrong button on the Canon's back panel menu. I had intended to turn down the fill flash power, but I managed to unknowingly turn the image quality from 'large jpeg' to 'S2' (1920 x 1208 px). I only discovered my mistake when the camera kept telling me I had space on the SD card for 9,999 more images, regardless of how many times I pressed the shutter button.

Raw talent

And purists, please don't get me started about shooting everything in 'raw'. I used to do that, but since I don't get paid to take pictures anymore (not for the last three years anyway) I can't be bothered.

All this holiday snap malarkey mainly only finds its way onto social media nowadays anyway. For more content, why not check out Prof Paul Hill's 'Approaching Photography' group on FB. There are a fair few decent snappers on there.

Consequently, nowadays, provided my pictures are in focus, have a decent depth of field as intended, and contain more pixels than I have pounds in my bank account, I don't sweat the technical stuff. As I used to say to my undergraduate students at the University of Derby, when they first picked up a DSLR – there's an easy way to remember what those letters on that dial on top of the camera mean:

'P' for Professional, 'A' for Amateur, 'TV' for Trying Very Hard…

Indeed, before the days of digital, if shooting on C41 stock for cruise ship passengers, I'd halve the film's ASA number, make sure the sun was behind me and use *f*11. It never failed.

If only life were that simple again.

CHASING SHADOWS

by David Kilpatrick

From Cameracraft No 1, 2012 – updated with revision comments (see asterisks*)

We have stopped seeing the world in black and white. Many generations of photographers learned to ignore colour because monochrome was their daily medium. They lived by light and its ability to transform scenes and subjects.

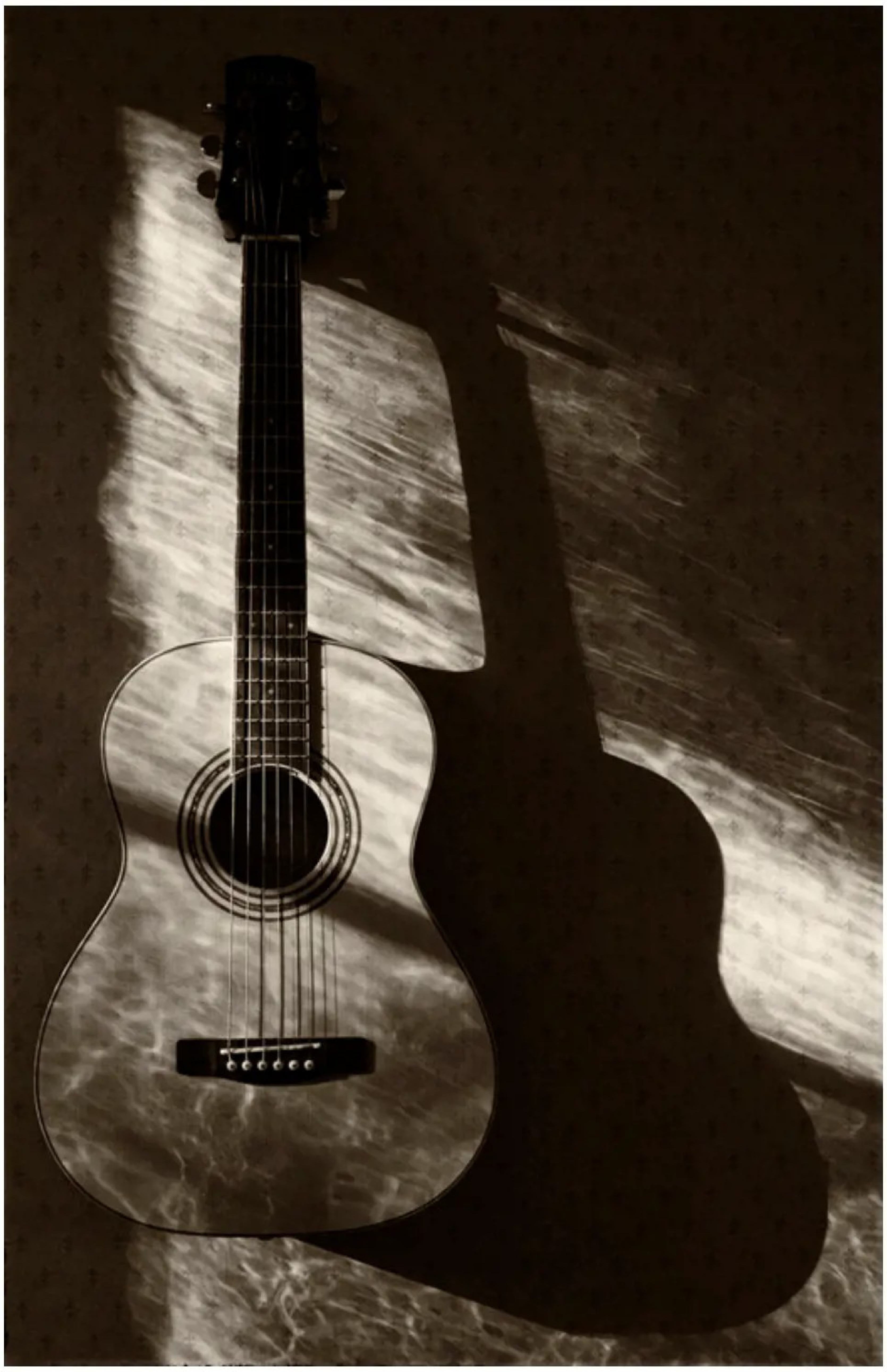
The study of shadows cast, umbral, and penumbral filled pages of textbooks and magazines. From the exact shape and position of the nose shadow in a portrait to the different qualities of sunlight and studio sources, it was at the heart of over 100 years of camerawork.

Colour photography began life with a dynamic range so limited that the rulebook was thrown away. Softer contrast without cast shadows became popular, especially in the studio where umbrellas created an era of symmetrical dirty smudges surrounding objects. Studios went to great pains to remove all hint of shadows, floating cut-out products in plain space with or without the help of retouching.

It's a legacy which lives on. Even now, commercial portrait studios love to show subjects against pure black ('film noir') or white and rarely allow the subject to cast a shadow.

We have forgotten how important cast shadows were in the first fifty years of the movie industry, where direct un-diffused lights provided power in two senses. We have not forgotten mid-20th century monochromists like André Kertèsz, Bill Brandt, Hugo van Wadenoyen or Walter Nurnberg, to name just a handful in very different fields. But we may have forgotten how they observed light and used shadows. In the digital age, we associate strong shadows with technical problems like noise or over-inked prints.

As we move away from optical viewfinders to (EVF) electronic displays, shadows are once again seen as earlier black and white photographers learned to pre-visualise them – pure black which the eye can not penetrate, as it can deep shade in the real world.



Nik Silver Efex Pro 2[2] (used for BW conversion of the cover and pictures in this article – see postscript and page 12) helped give this composition the feel of something from the mid-20th century. Drawing with light also means drawing with shadow. Georgian glass panes and a tree outside create the effect.*

Electronic viewfinders tend to lose highlight information as well. The sky appears at sunset without a sign of the sun. No doubt this will be corrected as technology improves, at both ends of the tonal range*[1].

Electronic finders give us the ability to change our view to black and white. Once, special viewing filters were used so that you could assess a scene in near-monochrome; movie directors still use them. Today you can preview the world in perfect monochrome at eye level, and see the effect of changes in exposure and contrast, through your EVF.

The colour of shade

Shadows as a subject or important element of a scene often work better in black and white. In colour, they take on a cast from either the open sky or surrounding fully lit areas. Blue skies on a sunny day may produce blue shadows. Many photographs capture the effect on snow where cast shadows can look as blue as the sky itself. Exactly the same relative colour shift affects sand or concrete, they are just not as good at gathering and reflecting the sky light.

Shadows as an effect of lighting on a subject, not cast shadows but the umbral gradations of a solid object, have an infinite range of colour casts as they are lit entirely by reflected light from the rest of the scene.

It is these casts which make pictures taken by reflected light so appealing. If a backlit portrait is taken with light reflected from sand or warm- coloured walls flooding back into the shadow, skin tones acquire a golden glow against the neutral to blue bias of the background scene. Fashion photographers love the narrow streets of Mediterranean seaside towns. Their combination of coastal light and multiple reflection from honey-coloured walls produces light that can be directional yet soft, tinted but still able to show fabric colours.

Colourful places where houses are painted can offer a choice of open-shadow colour casts, some to avoid and some to enjoy. Blue or green surfaces may not colour reflected light sympathetically, but they offer good backgrounds for people lit by warm colour reflected light.

This type of town or village is also a good place to look for cast shadows. They just look better falling on a painted stucco wall than they do on red brick or modern construction surfaces.

One of the enduring myths of photo-expert advice is that you should avoid shooting during the middle of the day. This may well apply in the open countryside. It doesn't apply in the built environment. Whether you are talking skyscraper canyons or Greek island alleys, morning and evening light can leave north-south running streets in the dark or create a choice of blinding into-the-sun versus flat sun-behind-you views on east-west orientations.

Mid-day sun can reveal textures and cast shadows on vertical surfaces, whether buildings on rock faces. It may bring other problems, such as contrast and colour temperature or the presence of strong heat haze.

Winter sun in latitudes where days are shorter may leave some subjects in permanent shadow. You can also encounter a difficult mismatch between clear blue sky and low sun with a yellow bias. It's nature playing crossed curves, blue shadows and jaundiced light, and this is a good time to consider converting to black and white.

Sharpness & scale

The sun is unique its ability to cast long shadows without the quality of the umbral edge changing. It's such a relatively small source, so far away, that it will cast sharp shadows on sea or ground from aircraft 30,000 feet above.

Even so, cast shadows from sunshine have a slightly soft edge which the eye sees as natural. We are so used to the quality of sun shadows that we can recognise a stage spotlight or flashgun shadow subconsciously. Creating a sun-like shadow from an artificial light source is difficult and calls for a small source at a great distance. The largest theatre or studio produces shadows from spotlights which have a steep perspective.

Using a close source – as with someone standing below an old-fashioned street lamp – this perspective can be dramatic. Combined with a wide angle camera view looking from the end of the cast shadow, towards the subject and the light source, it becomes a signature for mystery or drama. The huge flickering shadows cast by candles are caused by the same projection effect.

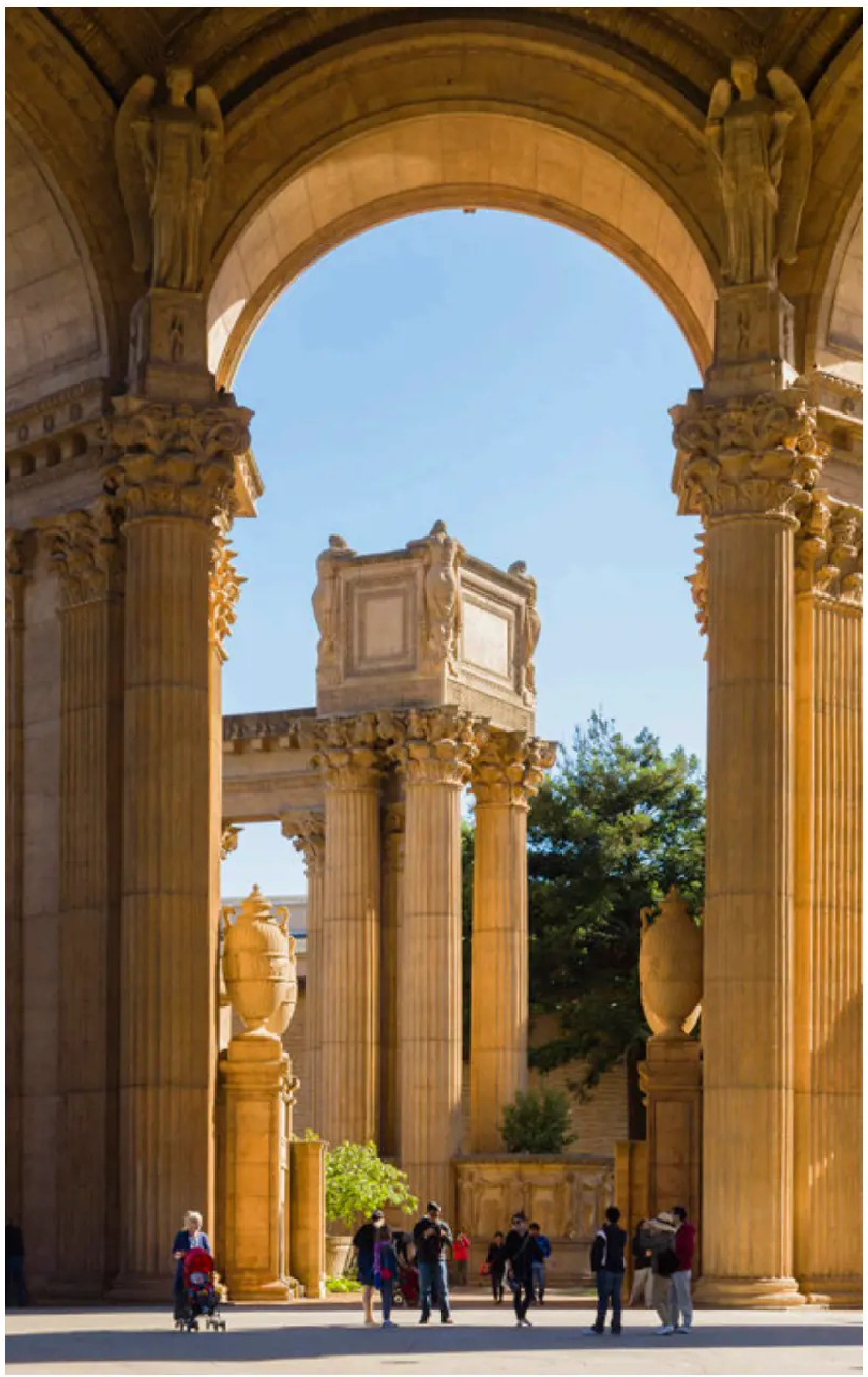
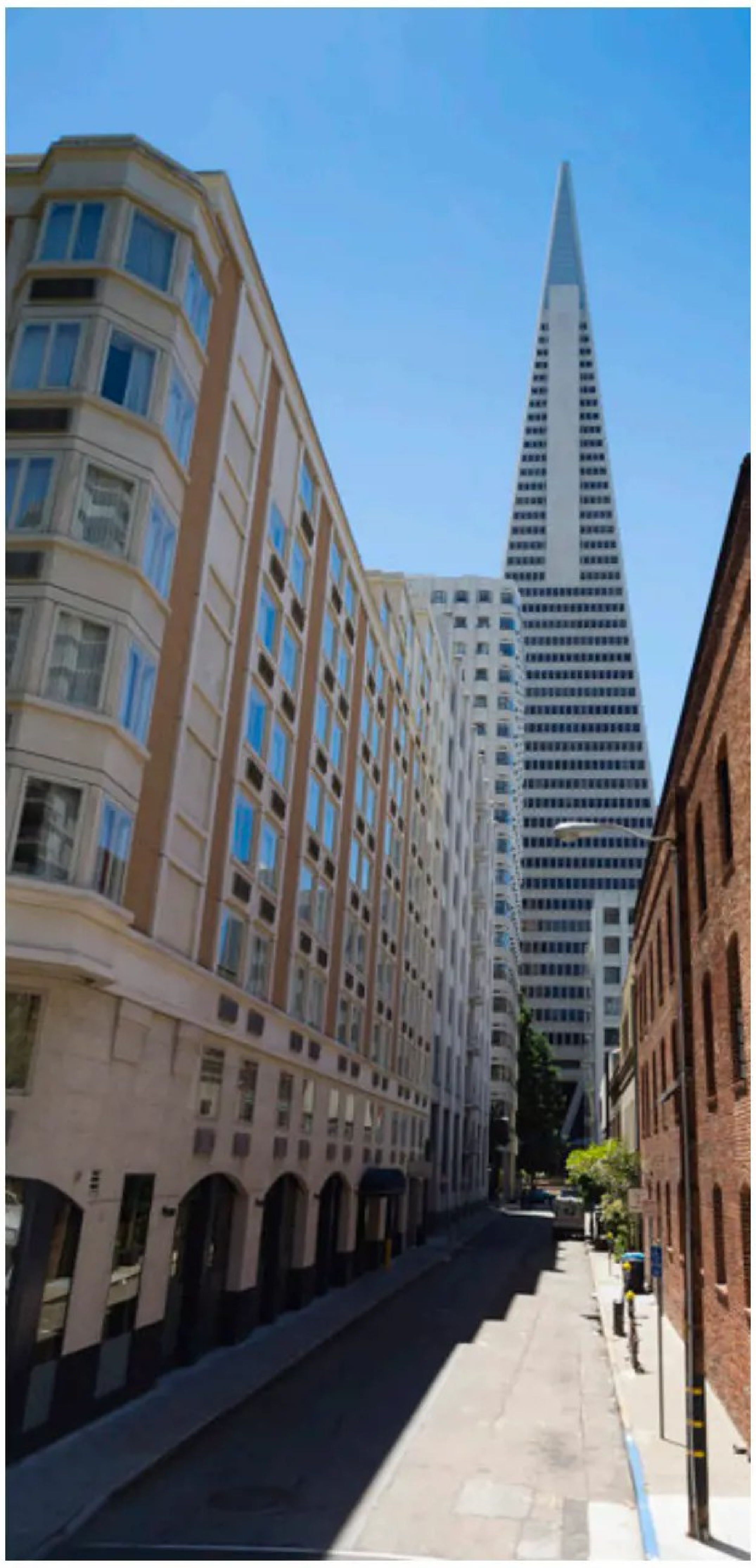
If an artificial light shadow has a soft edge (large relative source) this will be rendered differently by contrast settings. Portrait or low contrast capture will show the full gradation of the edge, higher contrast will make it look sharper. A pure lith-print or line conversion style will have no gradation and turn the shadow into a perfectly sharp shape. The exposure and contrast settings you choose will change the look, and the psychological impact, of shadows used this way.

In cities shadows may combine with reflected light from glass, ceramic or metal architectural surfaces – both in sunshine and by street light. Look around and look down.

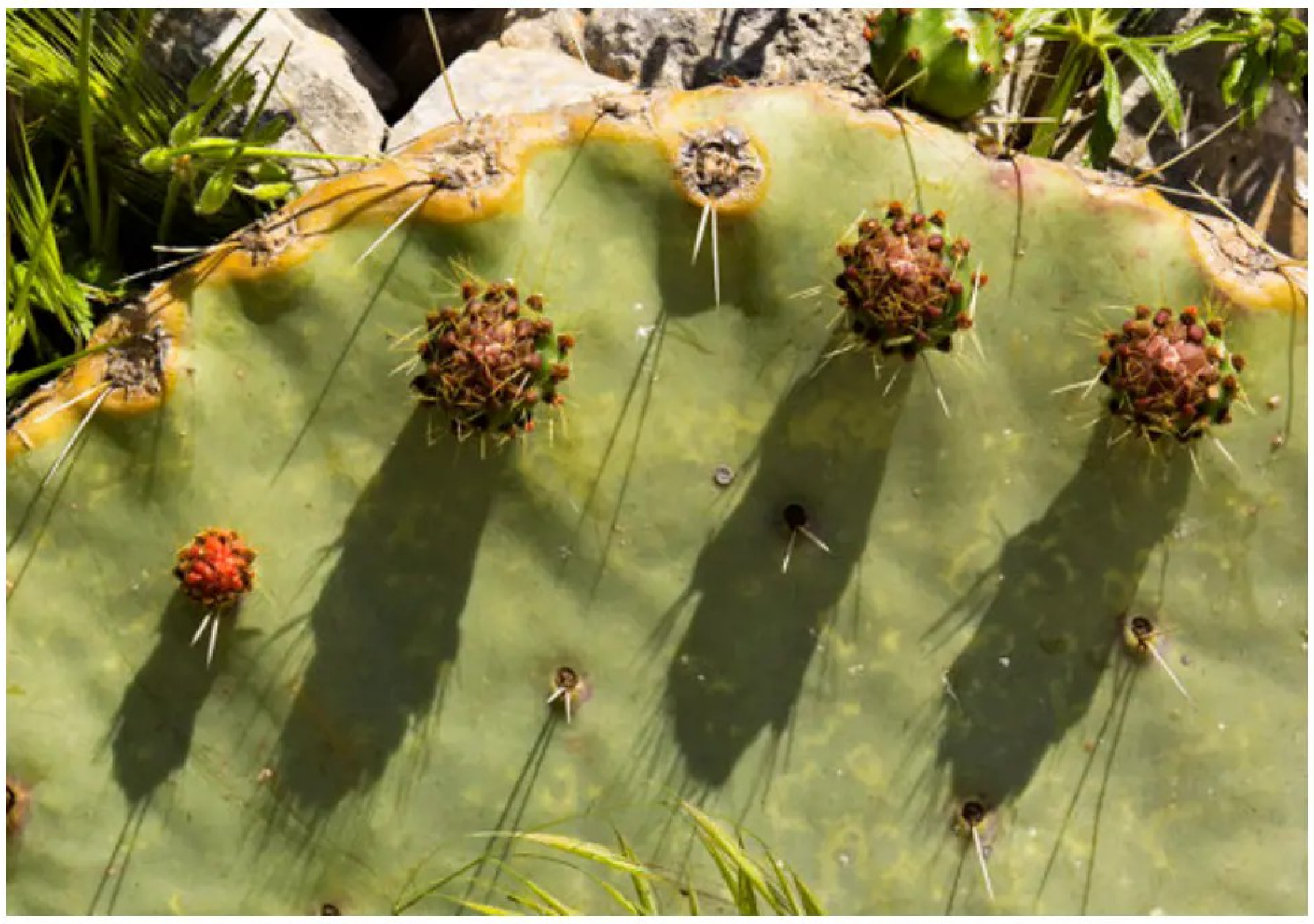
Shape shifting

I work in an old house with south-south-east facing windows. Inside, there are shutters with random gaps and knot-holes. In the windows, the glass panes are often 200 years old. Outside, wisteria hangs over them and trees change their shape as they grow and are cut back.

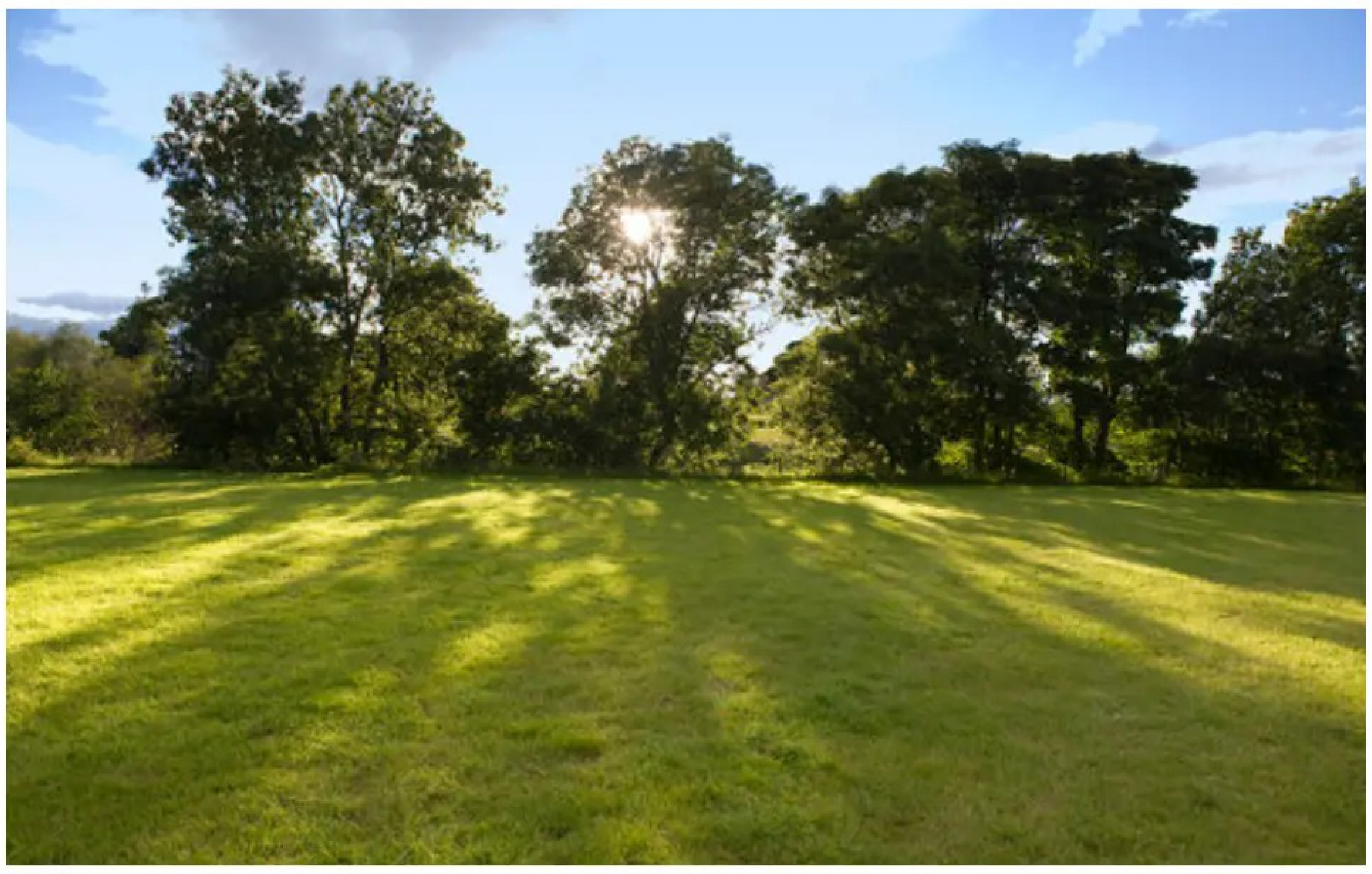
Clouds, seasonal change in the leaves, the wind, and the changing

Left: shaded areas lit by reflected light – gold on gold, Palace of the Arts, San Francisco – demonstrate why placing your subject in shade facing a sunlit wall can produce appealing colour. Right: 1pm, mid-day in the city, when the light and shade is better for a narrow street than morning or evening sun.



12 noon sun in May in southern Italy – a time of day to avoid, many will say. The cactus flower shadows are from overhead sun, and would not be the same at any other time of day.



Left: Shadows from the sun may lengthen but they don't spread out – this is entirely the effect from a 24mm lens on full frame. The shadow at the camera position is the same size as the tree casting it, it's just wide angle perspective which exaggerates the effect.[7]

path of sun cast light and shadow into the house.

In over twenty years*[3] I've never tired of the changes in shadows cast by objects in the rooms, or across them. The windows can act like a huge diffused light source, their shape modified by trees (see postscript for an update on this!*[4]). Even soft shadows have distinctive directional qualities and appear to move as I watch them.

Observing this has taught me much about how photographers can shape their own light. Natural light, especially in older interiors, is rarely as simple as a square softbox in the studio. It nearly always has 'shape' – the source is not a point, or a circle, or an even dome of sky. That sky may be four times as bright at one horizon and have a zone of dark clouds.

Trees or buildings may shape the 'source' of light for your subject into a triangle or a narrow slot. Sometimes, especially when cloud covers the coastline but leaves the sea open, light may come from a panoramic band of brightness at horizon level similar to what studio photographers used to call a 'longlight' and place level with the subject next to a shooting table.

Every different shape of light source casts shadows which echo its outline. A tall slot window in a castle will cast shadows that are very soft ended but well defined at the sides. Think of one of the most unpleasant light sources of the 20th century, the six- foot fluorescent tube, and the visually tiring quality of its 'shadowless' light.

When sun falls through leaded lights, the glass may refract light into patterns while the small panes are divided by the sharp shadow cast by the leading. If there's something outside casting a shadow – branches and leaves for example – the final combination can be complex and beautiful. It may even be worth photographing in its own right, just light and shadow falling on a surface.

When photographing an interior the natural and artificial light may have been planned for effect, and that could include the way it forms shadows. No matter what culture a viewer comes from, photographs which use shadows as a key part of their design will hold their attention.

A ragged pool of light reflected from windows in Prague casts vague shadows of people, an image 'held in' by the surrounding deep shade.

This simple but very detailed (24 megapixel) beach study looks casual but meant waiting for a few minutes. It's not an arranged shot, but a found one (whether that matters or not). The shadow moved fast enough for its position to be anticipated.

Time and exposure

On a more practical note, like many photographers I started life using limited equipment and materials. I quickly learned that the one stop difference between clear sunshine and slightly hazy sun, with the edge of a cloud in the way, could decide whether my shot was well exposed and easy to print or short of the ideal.

So we watch shadows! The eye is not too bad at telling the strongest sunshine from its diluted state, but cast shadows offer the best indicator. Standing with the camera on a tripod, one eye watching the building or landscape for the changing light, the other watching for the shadows to sharpen up. A familiar exercise?

Shadows also change with time and move surprisingly rapidly with the sun. The texture of lichen, the visibility of old carved letter in stone, or the dimensional rendering of a building can be transformed with a five or ten minute wait.

Reclaiming lost art

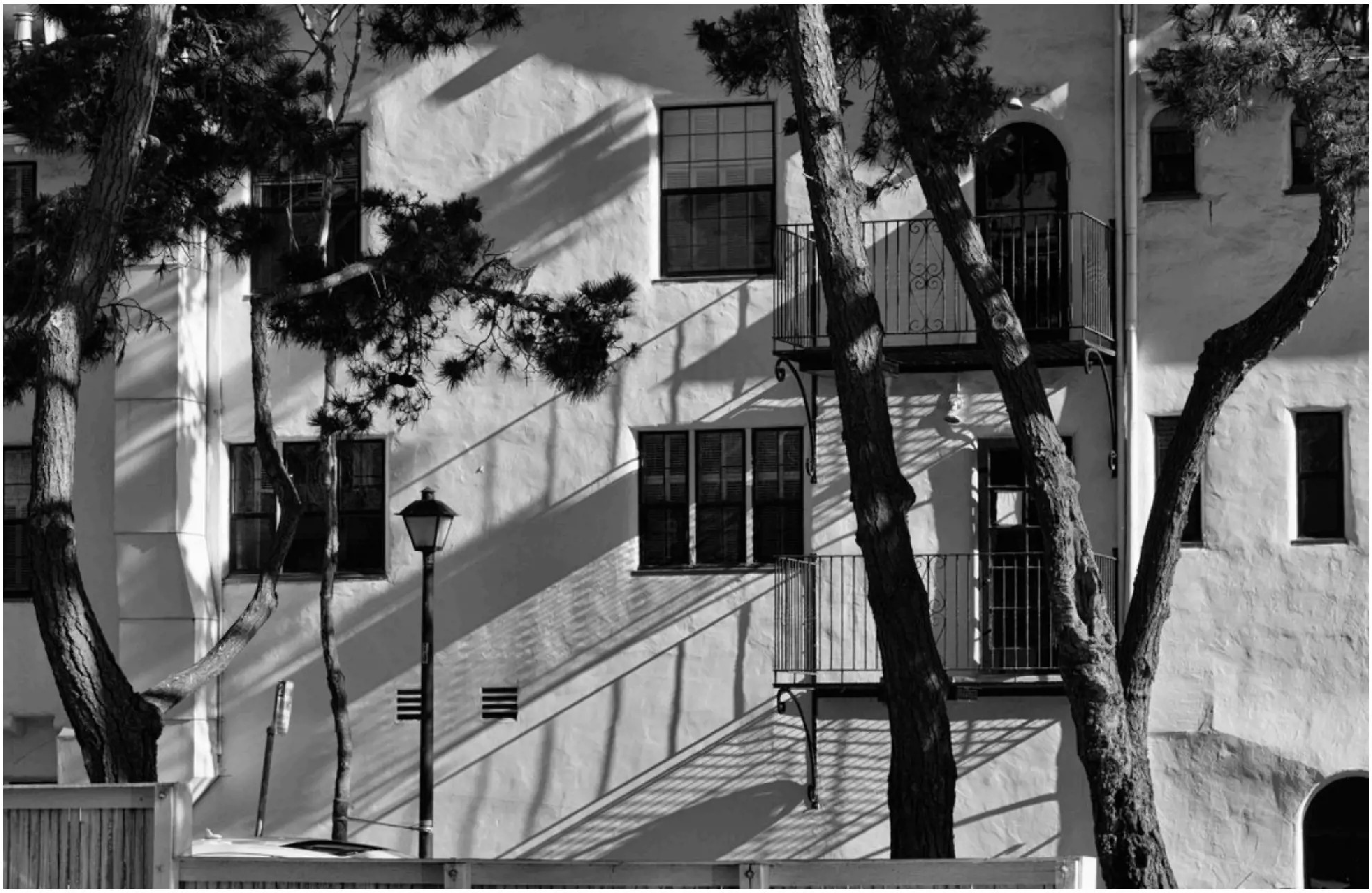
Why have shadows, once so important to photographers, lost their place? We can now photograph things in any light we wish, Fox Talbot called some early works 'Sun Pictures'; 170 years later, we don't need the sun.

Before photography, there was no great obsession with the sunlit world. Artists rarely painted sharp light and shade even if they had the occasional blue sky. After photography, artists began to enjoy the effects of light and shadow.

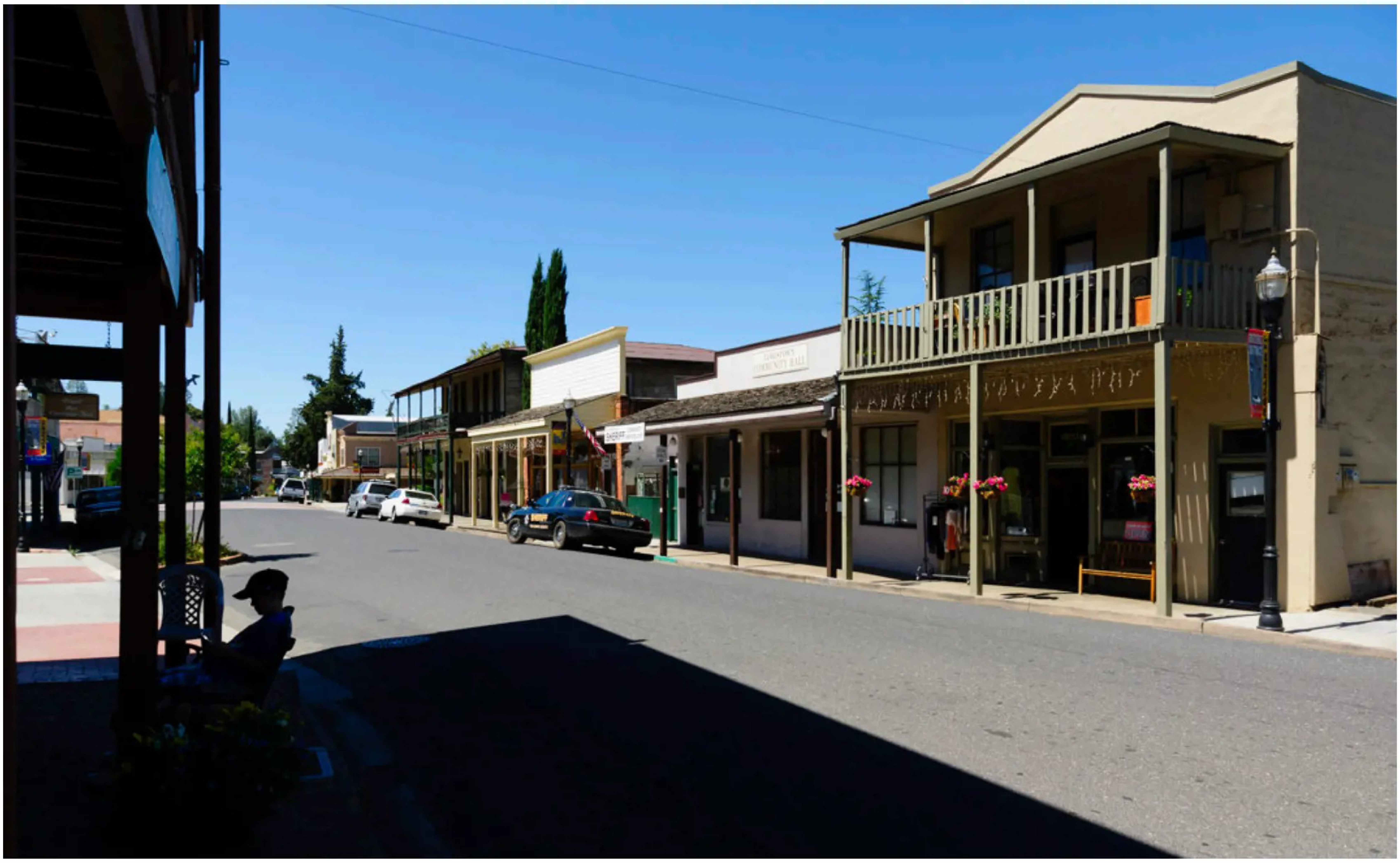
Then the trend reversed, with the changes that introduced this article. Today, it's unfashionable to show direct light and shadow. Trends such as the inevitable use of long time exposures in the landscape (accompanied by booming sales of 10-stop neutral density filters) and working in dull conditions post-processed to 'art effect HDR' dominate aspirational work*[5].

Digital processing has given us one recent benefit, in the form of the *Shadow* control for *Lightroom 4* and *Adobe Camera Raw* in CS6*[6]. This allows the brightening of a carefully defined band of tones, with the effect of putting detail into cast shadows. Where traditional negative photo printing would let such a shadow be almost pure with a mere hint of density above fog level, we have the option of imitating the eye's adaptation and showing more in our shadows without sacrificing a true black point. We can now use shadows as we want. It's time to find them again.

Footnotes marked by asterisks:
1 – this has not improved much despite 13 years of development!
2 – now DxO Nik Collection, see page 12.
3 – 20 was slightly under-counting. I've been 37 years here now, finally selling and the direction of light will be a big factor in house purchase!
4 – My large SSE facing windows all got white sun blinds in 2019, forming 1m x 2.3m natural softboxes.
5 – Dragan effect, Bruce Gilden, Dougie Wallace, and many landscape and street photographers.
6 – and all later Adobe versions, use with Clarity and Highlight for the above effect.
7 – the original article credited the Nikon D700 but didn't add that this is a full frame camera. The D700 remains a popular used choice at ±£300/$350 and was a brand new 12 megapixel option in 2012.



White buildings make a fine blank canvas for shadow, creating the wall texture and the cast patterns from trees and ironware (Carmel Beach, CA). Below, the geometry of a deep cast shadow emphasise lines, shapes, light and the baseball-capped boy. Jamestown, CA.



About republishing this article – the changes in type styles and page template between 2012 and the current magazine design, along with migrating from Adobe *InDesign* to Affinity *Publisher*, have required detail changes to edit and layout. I'm avoiding bleeding pictures off the page now, to make digital printing straightforward. The two shots above no longer use a full page. All the other pictures have been left the original size or very slightly as columns are now a little wider. This combined with 2025 typography gets more words in! *Publisher* is able to open, and edit, Adobe Acrobat PDFs but can't open the original .INDD *InDesign* files. It can open .IDML legacy format files exported by *InDesign*. None exist for the original *Cameracraft* 2012-2015 series. All CS6 documents were re-saved using Adobe's subscription-based CC updates, an expense I now limit to the PS/ACR/LR Photography package.

SOFTWARE

Future-proof what you've invested in

How long do you expect to be able to view, open, copy, edit, or convert all the document and images you have on your computer or saved on a remote cloud of servers from your phone? Some kinds of data are more durable than others, and promise to be safer for you or any future generations to access.

The format for most text data should, ideally, be plain ASCII. In its original form this is simply a standard encoding for the Roman alphabet, including capitals and some symbols, and Arabic numerals. It's what any old typewriter could do. Extended when the world went beyond typewriter limits, personal computers of all varieties could handle many more characters from the 1980s on and there's no reason to think future systems will lose this.

What they may lose is use of specific fonts or character sets for text mapped against the original 128 (7-bit) or later 256 (8-bit) character coding. In the 1990s, Icon Publications Ltd had mathematical, scientific and music score typesetting programs with special fonts. By the early 2000s the operating systems for these academic and specialist programs were obsolete and replaced by very high cost software. The documents they created can no longer be opened or printed, and when the docs can be read, they produce a garbled mess with incorrectly mapped fonts.

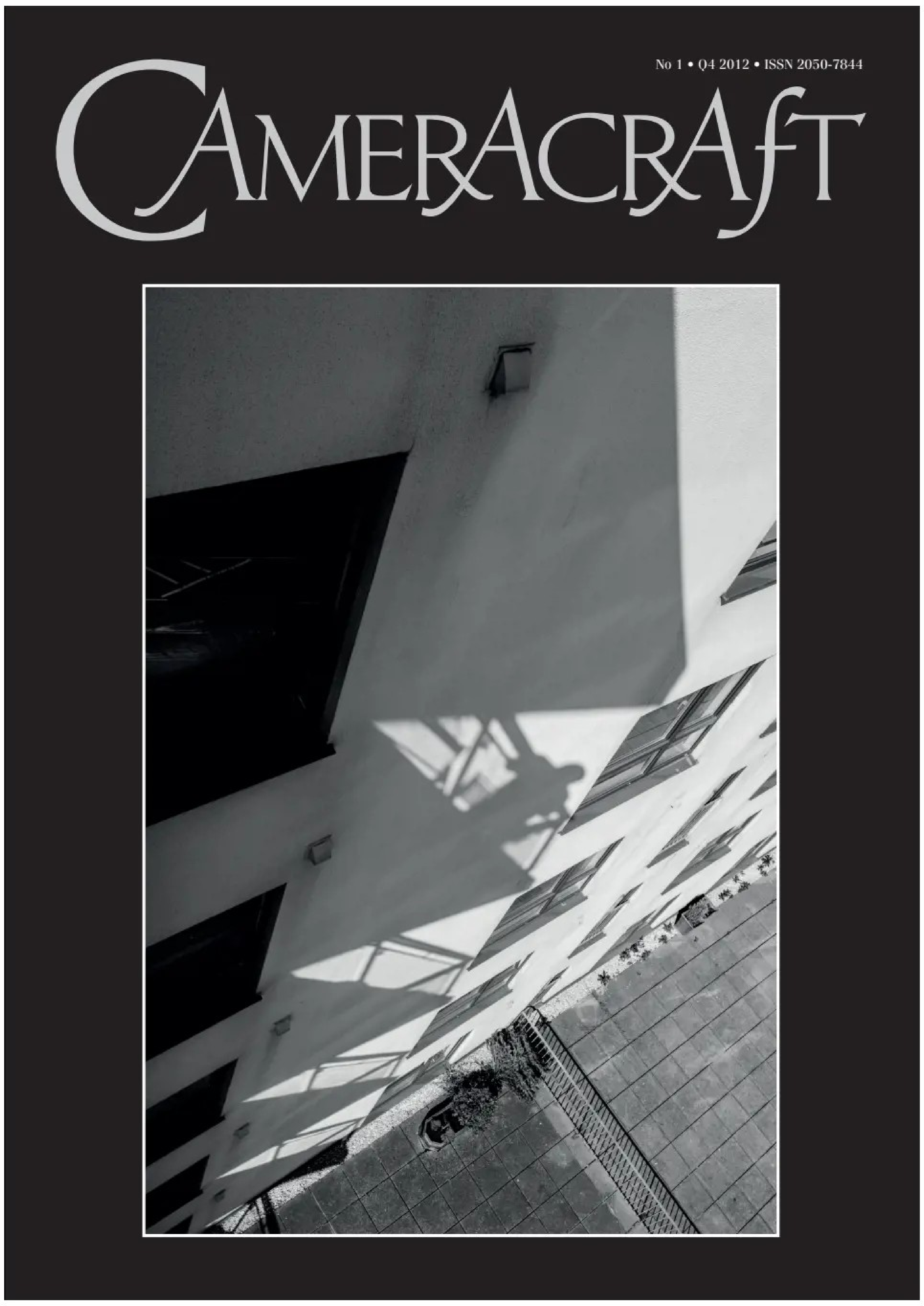
However, when the results of work were exported as PICT, PNG, EPSF or TIFF images they have remained usable (if not editable). In photography all these venerable formats have been used but by far the most durable is the TIFF (or .TIF) – Tagged Image File Format. A TIFF is a RIF (raster image file, or bitmap) with a chunk of header data added, so when a program opens it, it's told the pixel dimensions and orientation, the bit depth (typically 8-bit or 256 values per channel), the channels (such as RGB or CMYK). The EPSF (Encapsulated PostScript) format describes a page with vector info – 'draw a line between co-ordinates X1Y1 and X2Y2, draw a circle so many pixels in radius centred on co-ordinate X3Y3' and so on. Complex vectors and bitmaps can be combined, and can text with specific size and fonts in exact position.

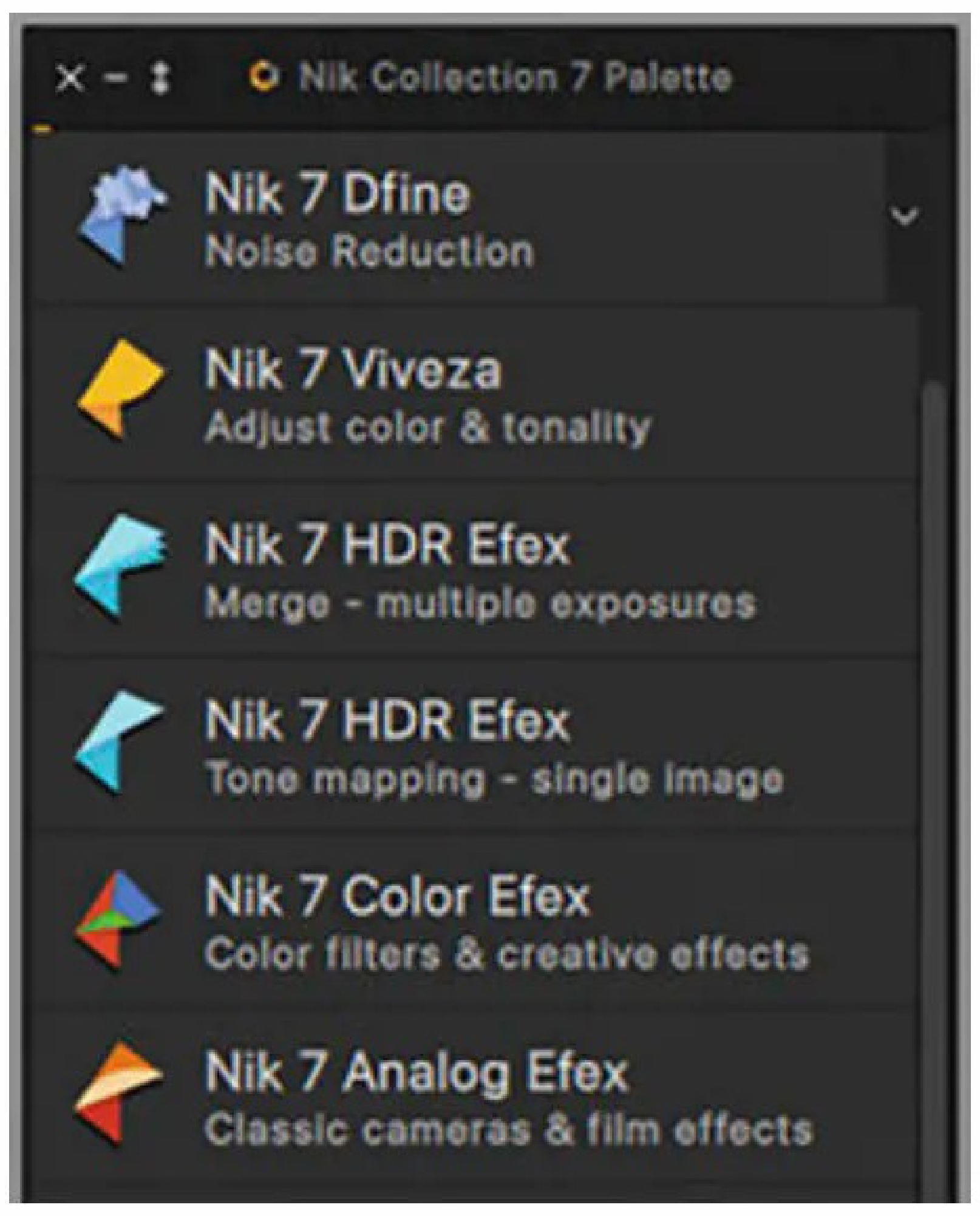
JPEG (in many forms) is a development of TIFF to include image compression, rather than lossless data compression. It was developed by committee (the Joint Photographic Experts Group) and made public domain from the start. JPEG is what enabled the first consumer digital cameras to fit more than a handful of small images on a memory card!

Over time, universal data formats for images, designs and text became more sophisticated. One of the most versatile is Adobe's proprietary PDF (Portable Document Format) which is used for the digital download of this magazine. It's been extended over time to be able to show video content (which we do not do) and has some aspects which are open to all developers. But, like Adobe's *InDesign* publishing software and their photographic suite with *Photoshop*, *Lightroom* and *Camera Raw* it's essentially a locked format where you can't make full use of it without paying many hundreds to Adobe annually. *Acrobat*, the PDF encoder and processor, is only included in the most expensive subscriptions such as their full *Creative Cloud*.

When producing this edition, having the press PDFs for the preceding 2012 article proved the only way, without buying specialist software or reviving the Adobe subscription, to copy text. This was in turn only enabled by Serif's *Affinity Publisher* package having the ability to read PDFs as editable documents. But there's no guarantee any current or future proprietary and protected data format will be readable in 13 more years' time unless you keep programs and OS installations, or run in an emulated environment. Nearly all Icon's very early text, from 1987 to the mid-1990s, was written using *WordPerfect* and some images were saved as *XRes* – it's a good thing they are not needed now in any way! Fortunately programs in the Apple ecosystem tended to have data portability, like their spin-off *FileMaker*. But many did not.

Do not rely on image catalogues (*Lightroom*, *Apple Photos* etc) to store or save anything. Keep separate JPEG (it seems safe for that) or TIFF images. And never shoot movies!





In 2012 we used paid-for NIK plug-ins for Photoshop. The black and white on page 11, and the 2012 No 1 cover (left) used the Nik Silver Efex 'Fine Art' look while those on page 8 and top of page 10 used 'Yellowed 1' and 'Antique 1'. Then the Nik suite lost its updates, and became free, acquired by Google and given away but in danger of becoming incompatible with new operating systems. We have legacy computers and programs to retain use of such things.Finally, DxO took the Nik legacy over and now there's a bang up–to-date suite (above, part of) with a free 30-day trial. The full suite costs £145.99 or for those with the last paid licences a £79.99 upgrade. See: shop.dxo.com/en/nik-collection-7.html

VANISHING

Anna Arendt's black and white book from Charcoal Press has a haunted quality. It feels like a sequence from the mind's eye and not the camera lens.

My name is Anna Arendt. But that isn't the name my parents gave me when I was born.

I was born and spent my life in the German Democratic Republic. It was a dictatorship. Many of us lived in fear. The Stasi was everywhere.

I was 24 when the Wall fell. My daughter was two.

The Stasi was dissolved. But the fear remains.

Both my parents were born 1940 in Germany. Both children of war.

My grandfathers had been soldiers. Both had been in Poland between 1940 and 1941.

One came back two years after

the war was over. The other one never came back home.

I remember the faces of my grandmothers, my mother, my father when I asked questions about the war. I remember this first as a child, later as a young woman, then as a mother, and now as a grandmother myself.

There were no answers. Only silence and tears.

As a child I found a way to open a secret shelf that contained photo albums of my family. I discovered the power of a picture. A picture taken in summer 1940. A young family, my grandmother, her baby and my grandfather in German uniform. A picture full of contradictions, carrying ambivalent feelings even until today.

My husband's father was Sid Grossman. His family came from an area in Poland that once was part of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. This was the same area my grandfathers were sent to during the war.

For more than 15 years I travelled to these places both our families had been. I walked through cities and villages, forests and what was left of concentration camps.

During this time I photographed strangers on my journeys and my family and friends back home in Berlin. I photographed my friend Antije giving birth.

I photographed her and her daughter, together full of joy. And I photographed Antije's last days on earth, only four years later.

I photographed tenderness and intimate moments of love with my husband, Adam.

I photographed his mother, Miriam, as she was passing away in New York only one month before Adam and I married.

For how long exists memory?

All those years, a whole century and even longer passed by.

Like a butterfly on a summer day arrives on a flower and in the blink of an eye it disappears.

But our skin carries memory, the stones do, the trees, the air, the rain and our tears carry memory.

When the world seems broken, I go to the forest.

I like wolves, ravens, crows and deer.

Looking into the eyes of a wild animal reminds me about reality.

About beauty and brutality.

Making pictures is my way to move on.

Vanishing by Anna Arendt is published this month by Charcoal Press of Wooster, Ohio.

ISBN – 978-1-7362345-5-9. 144 Pages, Hardcover, Linen with Faux Leather w/ Tipped-in image. 7 x 9.5 inches, Edition of1000. Price $55.

charcoalbookclub.com
charcoalpress.com

BUILDINGS IN THE LANDSCAPE

Most landscape photographers look for scenes where nature rules, clear from man's interference. Tim Burgess seeks out buildings which add to the composition.

There are locations which are known for the structures in view. There are obvious ones, like the church at Rutland Water or the cottage in Glencoe. There are ones sited so you can't miss them and others which are hard to find or minimal in the view but complete it perfectly.

Tim Burgess has been winning accolades on many platforms, and in competitions like the Guild of Photographers, International Garden Photographer of the Year, , *Amateur Photographer*, and 500px.

"Mankind has left his mark on this planet," Tim says, "and I like to incorporate an element of this giving us a sense of scale, of being there, and who and what has gone before us. It's something I have been doing with out even thinking about it. I'm very lucky now being based in the Southwest of the UK, where there are many an abandoned buildings. I like to explore and now I'm retired I have got the opportunity to travel further afield.

"I use a Vanguard Active 25L backpack which is in line with most carry-on size limitations. It allows me to take one camera body and three lenses, my filters and batteries. My current equipment is Sony A7RIV, Tamron 17-28mm, Sony FE 24-105mm and Sigma 100-400mm. I use Formatt Hitech ND filters and polariser. With the camera on a Manfrotto 190CX Pro4 tripod and ball head, I use a Sony remote commander to release.

"When out exploring the landscape I dress in layers – most are merino wool and I have a mid-layer Vallerret top which has pockets for batteries to keep warm close to your body and a built-in lens cleaning cloth. I carry lightweight RAB waterproofs and sturdy waterproof walking/mountain boots and gaiters for when really wet.

"My work tends to be more panoramic than normal camera aspect ratio, and I think this is because I worked in the film and television industry all my working life in Animation and Effects, so I am used to the wider TV screen format. If I can when creating a stitched panorama in the field I will try to hand hold and only use the tripod if really necessary.

"I choose to use black and white if the weather is poor or if I'm shooting mid-day. Sky and detail are important in my decision – I first process a colour image before taking it into *Photoshop* to create a neutral or low key black and white base to start from. I then create a sequence of luminance masks so i can work on different adjustments for the parts of the image I want to work on – building up my darks and lights to my liking".

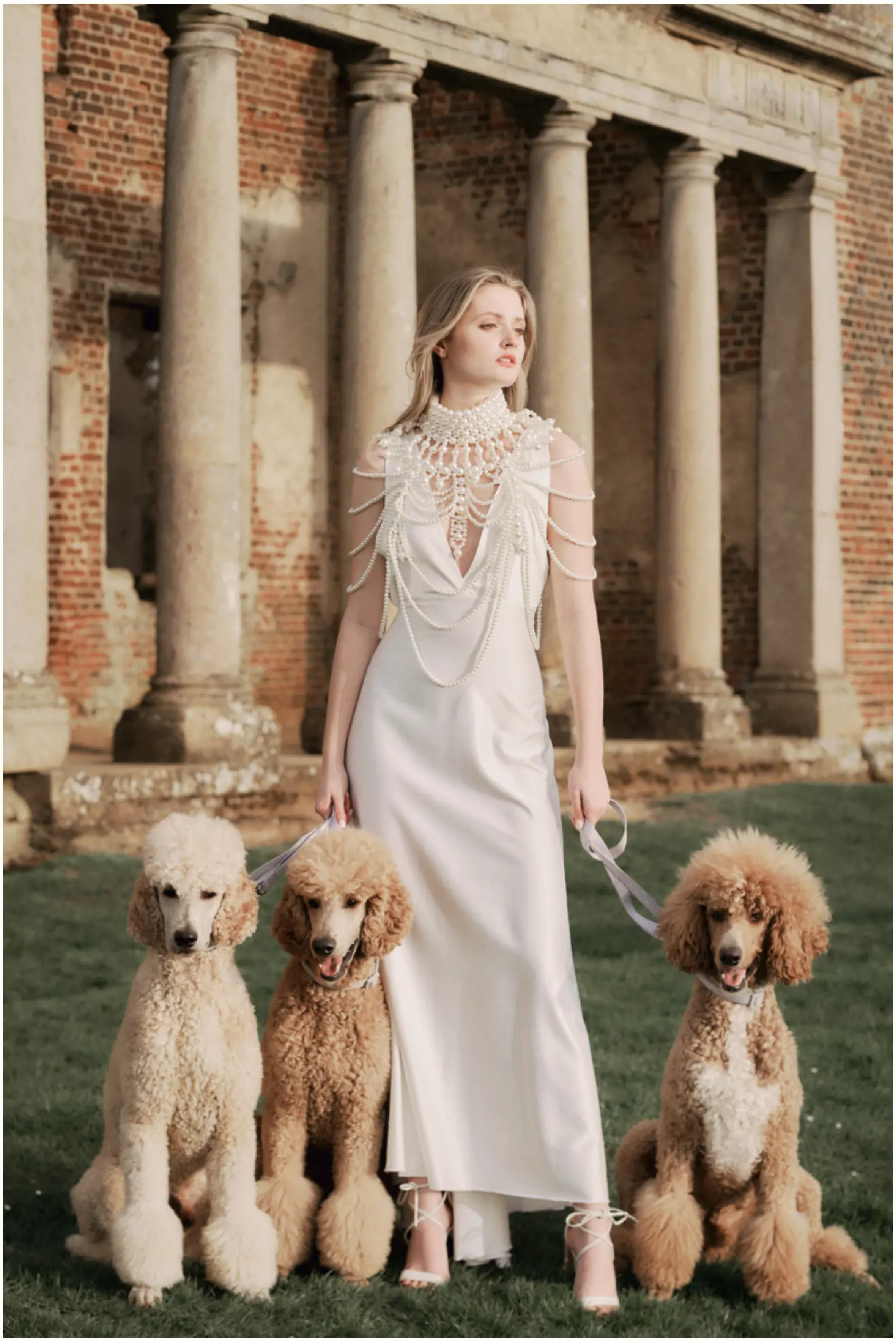
500px.com/timmburgess
igpoty.com/profiles/tim-burgess/

Facing page – Shingle Street, East Sussex. Top, a lonely planet… looking towards the lighthouse keepers' cottage. Bottom, the vast shingle beach is in constant change because of the tides and weather.
This page – Nun's Cross Farm, about three miles from Princetown on Dartmoor. It's about a mile and a half walk from the nearest parking spot.
Overleaf – Alpine pasture, Alpes de Siusi, Italy. This is the highest-altitude pasture in Europe, in a car-free zone of the Dolomites. From the hotel you can hike to many different locations.
Page 20 – top, a panorama of the Black Cuillin on Skye, Scotland. Middle, the red barn at Emsworthy Mire, Dartmoor National Park, Devon. Bottom, Flimstone Chapel, a grade II listed building within the firing range of the Castlemartin Army Training Camp, Pembrokeshire (only accessible at limited times).
Page 21 – the Old Boat Shed, River Rothay, near Ambleside in the Cumbrian Lake District.

Roamin' in the ruins...

... yet it's the Home Counties not Rome, and that light is early Spring sunshine. Stuart Wood takes us through a bridal fashion editorial shoot with a canine supporting cast but no colour cast!

I had the opportunity to work again with top UK Bridal couturier, Mayfair-based Shimmering Ivory, and shoot some of her latest creations. Wwe decided to use the lovely weather and shoot outdoors. I have worked with Sian Hughes-Cooke on many occasions and you could say we have become a team. What I love about working with Sian is that we both love to explore different ideas and concepts, rather than a simple girl in a nice dress with a bouquet. What is also great as a team is that Sian will concentrate fully on the fitting of the dress and be on hand to style it throughout the shoot and will have no qualms at stopping me if the slightest detail is wrong with the garment. This is ideal and means that I can fully concentrate on the photography knowing that the images later will be styled to the same standards of any fashion magazine.



Our idea was to get something different to illustrate the perfect British bride and to feature an English Rose and to model the dresses we used Izzy, an up and coming modelling talent.

Fortunately, Izzy and her family happen to own three fabulous poodles whose colour perfectly matched the sandstone pillars of our location. Other accessories that somehow fitted in the cars was a chaise longue (as you do) and even a changing tent to afford Izzy some privacy when changing into outfits.

It is always important to plan your shoots logistically in order to release you to concentrate fully on the photography. As usual, we had already worked on the ideas before we got to the location using mood boards. As there are always so many variables that can affect a photo shoot, it is vital to control the controllables and leave nothing to chance.

As we had monitored the weather closely and there was every likelihood of completely clear skies, we decided to use the deep shadows that would likely be present as a result.

Going for a distinctly '*Vogue Italia*' style, we sourced some suitable ruins to form the backdrop and deliberately waited until later in the afternoon so that the sun was lower and much more complimentary if used properly.

For the images of Izzy and the dogs coming toward us, I positioned them at an angle to the pillars so that we would achieve almost Rembrandt lighting from the sunlight. As the sun was now low, we would naturally have a 'warmer' light and so it proved when processing the images. This meant that effectively, we had a slight yellow cast over all the images and even the white wedding dress was rendered somewhat saffron and needed cleaning up. To correct this I simply selected yellow in *Capture One Pro* and desaturated until the dress became white again. As the colour green can also be a little too dominant in an image, I also adjusted the grass similarly. This selection of images were all shot on my favourite Sigma 85mm ƒ1.4 ART lens. For me this lens is all about the depth of field, so I do not often go narrower than ƒ4 and am far more likely to be shooting at ƒ2.8 (as here) or even wider to get that beautiful separation.

On the cards too was definitely some contrasty black and white where we could really use those deep shadows and really immerse ourselves in that *Vogue Italia* style. To counter those shadows where needed, I packed my Elinchrom THREE lights.

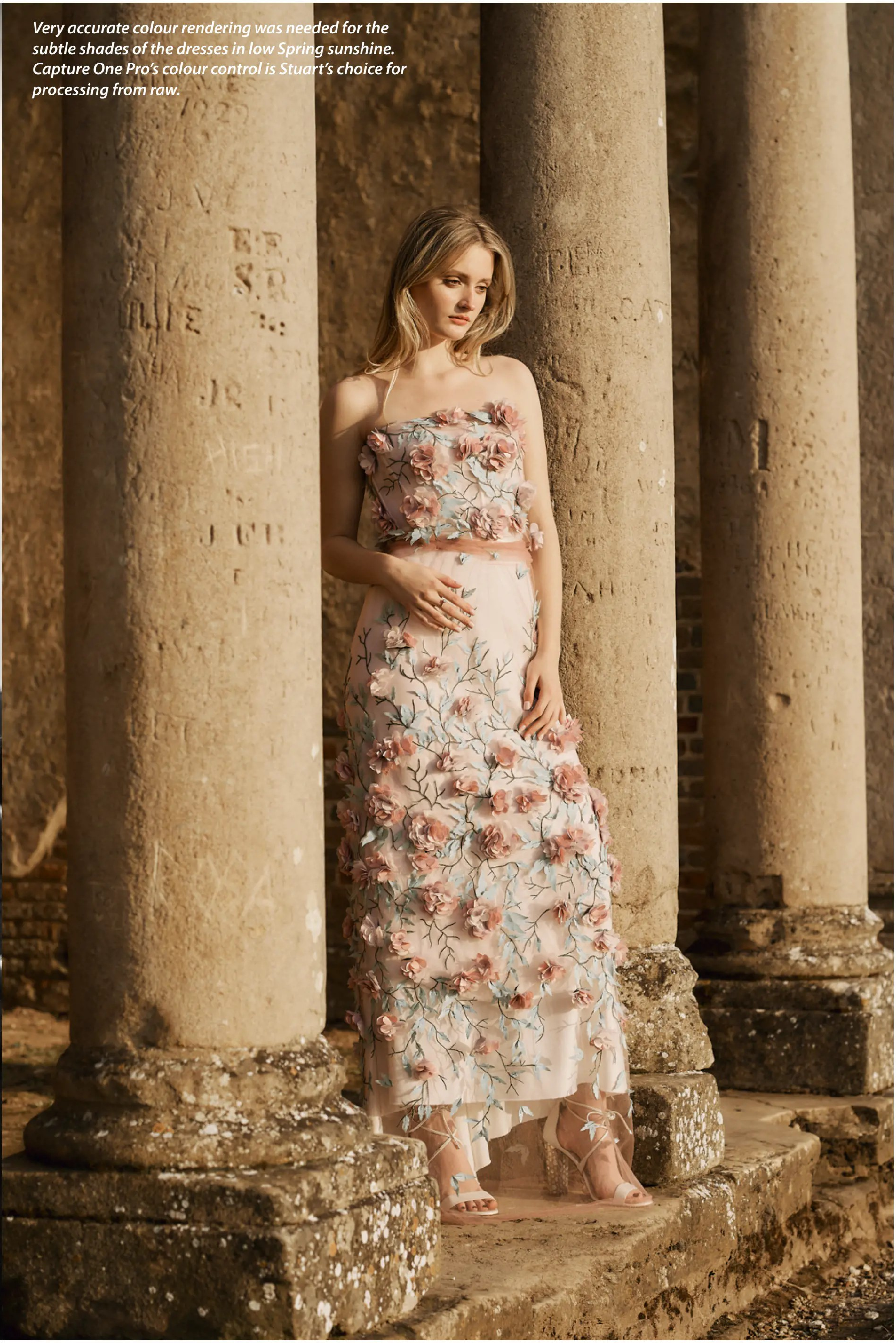
The versatility and available power of these lights – all in a package the size of your average 70-200mm so handy for fitting in your airline cabin bag – never ceases to amaze me and we easily achieved the required power to match the harsh sunlight. For the main cover shot, I used a THREE to light both Izzy and the two dogs and of course, our chaise longue was utilised perfectly.

If you want to get inspired and start shootings images that are different for a reason and not just for the sakes of being different, my tip would be to study the great fashion photographers – Avedon, Parkinson and their contemporaries.

Being a great believer in not following the pack, and as a result of my three decades shooting for all the top-tier magazines and major campaigns for all the TV companies, my style is distinctly editorial. I am far more influenced by the top fashion photographers than other wedding photographers. There is a great app available called *Readily* and for £12 a month you get access to all the current top fashion magazines from around the world. If that doesn't inspire, then nothing will.

The Sigma 85mm ƒ1.4 ART kept focus tracking with Izzie walking the dogs towards the camera – and running across the shot too

Stuart Wood is a Fellow of the BIPP and the SWPP. Wedding Website:
www.stuartwoodweddings.com
Commercial Website:
www.stuart-wood.com
Instagram & TikTok:
@stuartwoodphoto

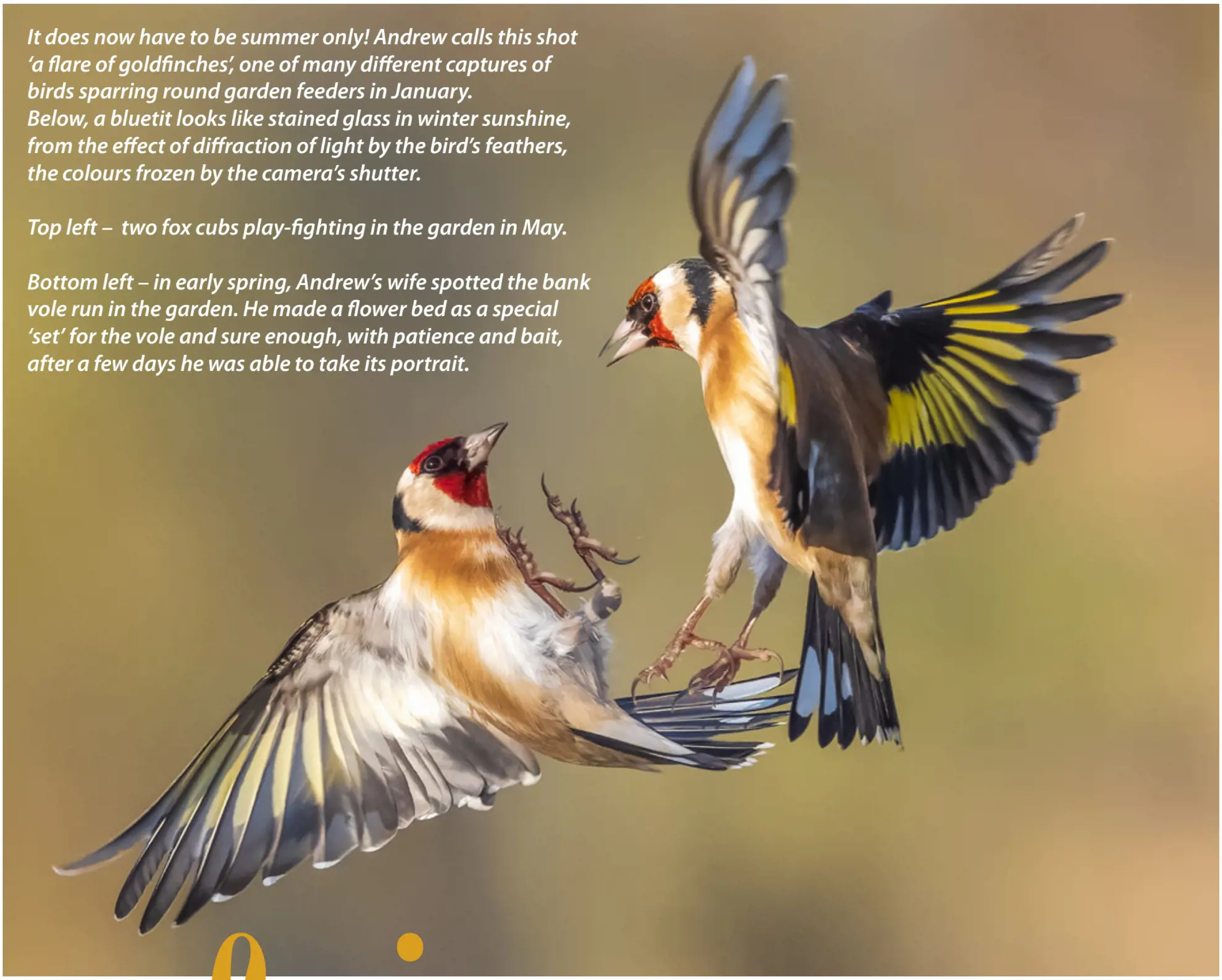


Very accurate colour rendering was needed for the subtle shades of the dresses in low Spring sunshine. Capture One Pro's colour control is Stuart's choice for processing from raw.

THIS SUMMER TAKE A garde WITH

Over the last ten years I have had the privilege of visiting gardens all over the UK as well as focusing on our tiny plot in South Shropshire in order to explore and capture the hidden lives of birds, insects and mammals. *Garden Safari* is the result, with over 120 species and 208 pages bursting with colour – firecrests, otter in a garden stream, a fox family playing in a Clapham Garden, red squirrels fighting in the Isle of Wight, blonde hedgehogs scurrying along lawns in Alderney.

I am firmly of the belief that the wildlife beyond our window and under our noses is as worthy of study as the rare beasts of plain, jungle and desert.



It does now have to be summer only! Andrew calls this shot 'a flare of goldfinches', one of many different captures of birds sparring round garden feeders in January.
Below, a bluetit looks like stained glass in winter sunshine, from the effect of diffraction of light by the bird's feathers, the colours frozen by the camera's shutter.

Top left – two fox cubs play-fighting in the garden in May.

Bottom left – in early spring, Andrew's wife spotted the bank vole run in the garden. He made a flower bed as a special 'set' for the vole and sure enough, with patience and bait, after a few days he was able to take its portrait.

n safari

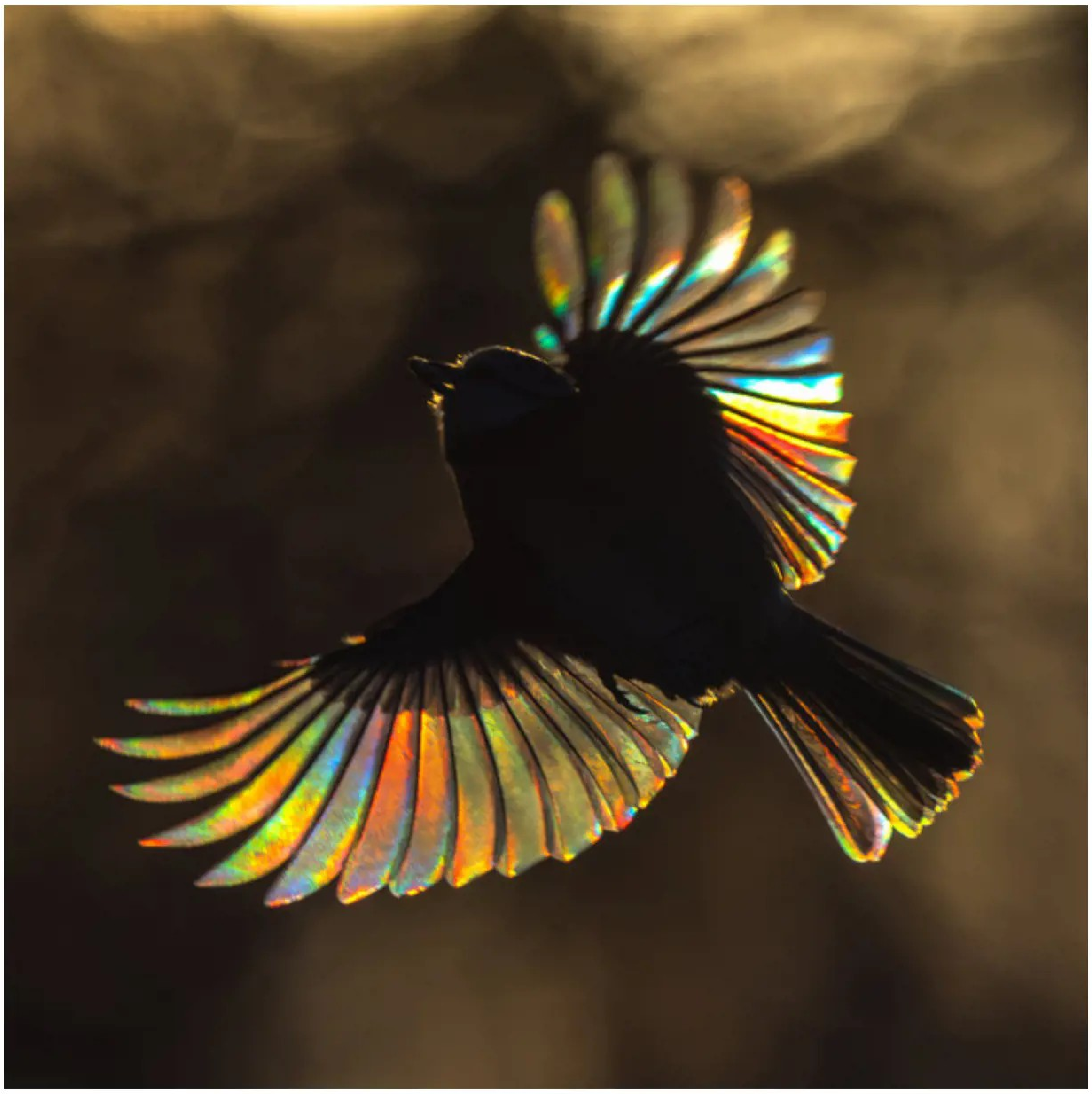
ANDREW FUSEK PETERS

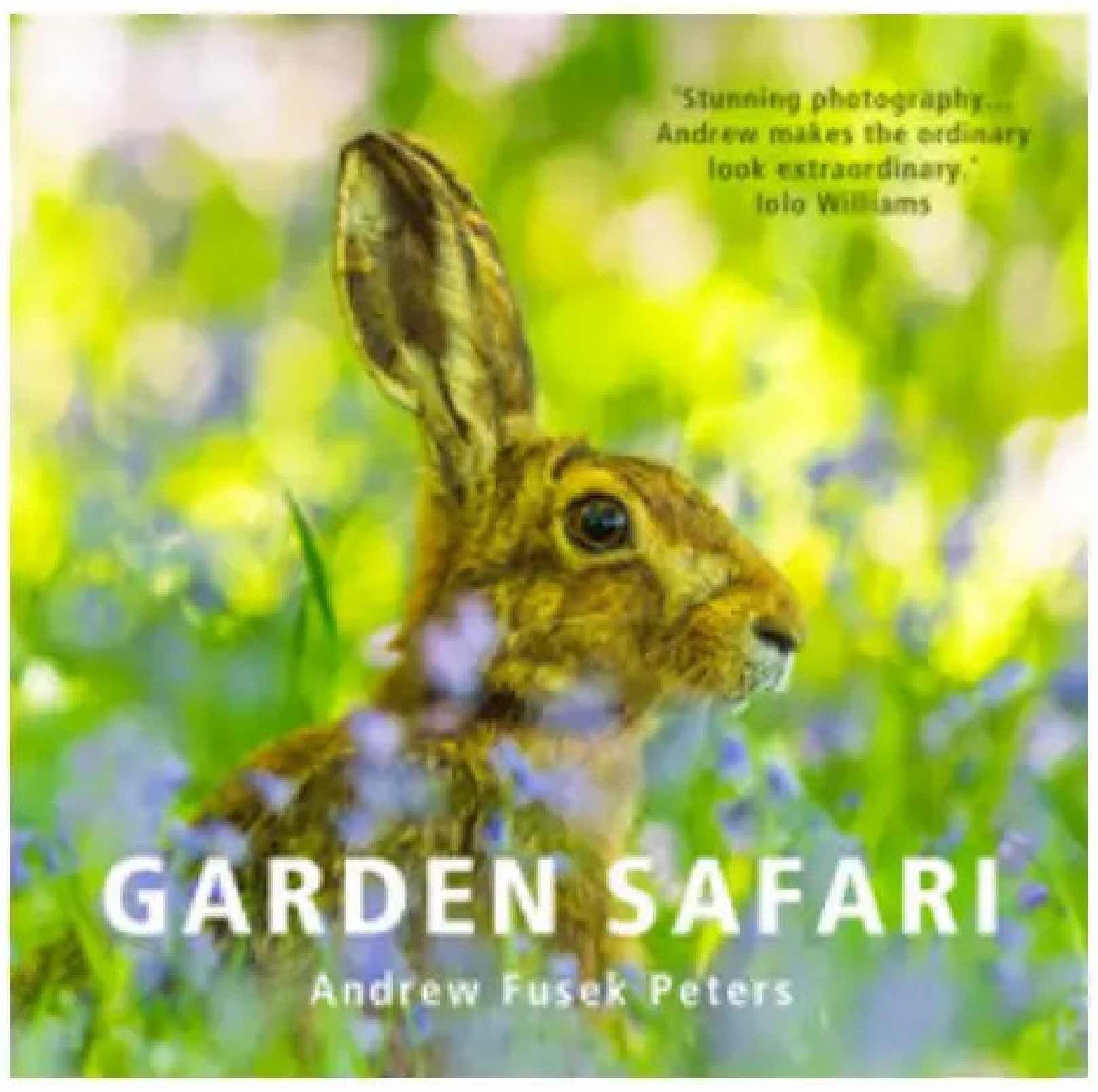
As Iolo Williams kindly said 'Andrew makes the ordinary look extraordinary'.

To see the wren fly through our garden carrying last year's leaves to build this year's nest is an honour and I love the fact that my commute to work is often less than five yards!

Here is my celebration of urban parks, parkland, cemeteries, plots, allotments, and arboretums filled with nectaring swallowtails and fighting bramblings, the great white egret at sunset and little owls learning to fly – and not forgetting of course, the humble blue tit seen with flare of wings and then again at dawn, where the rarely captured diffraction effect turns this most common bird to stained glass.

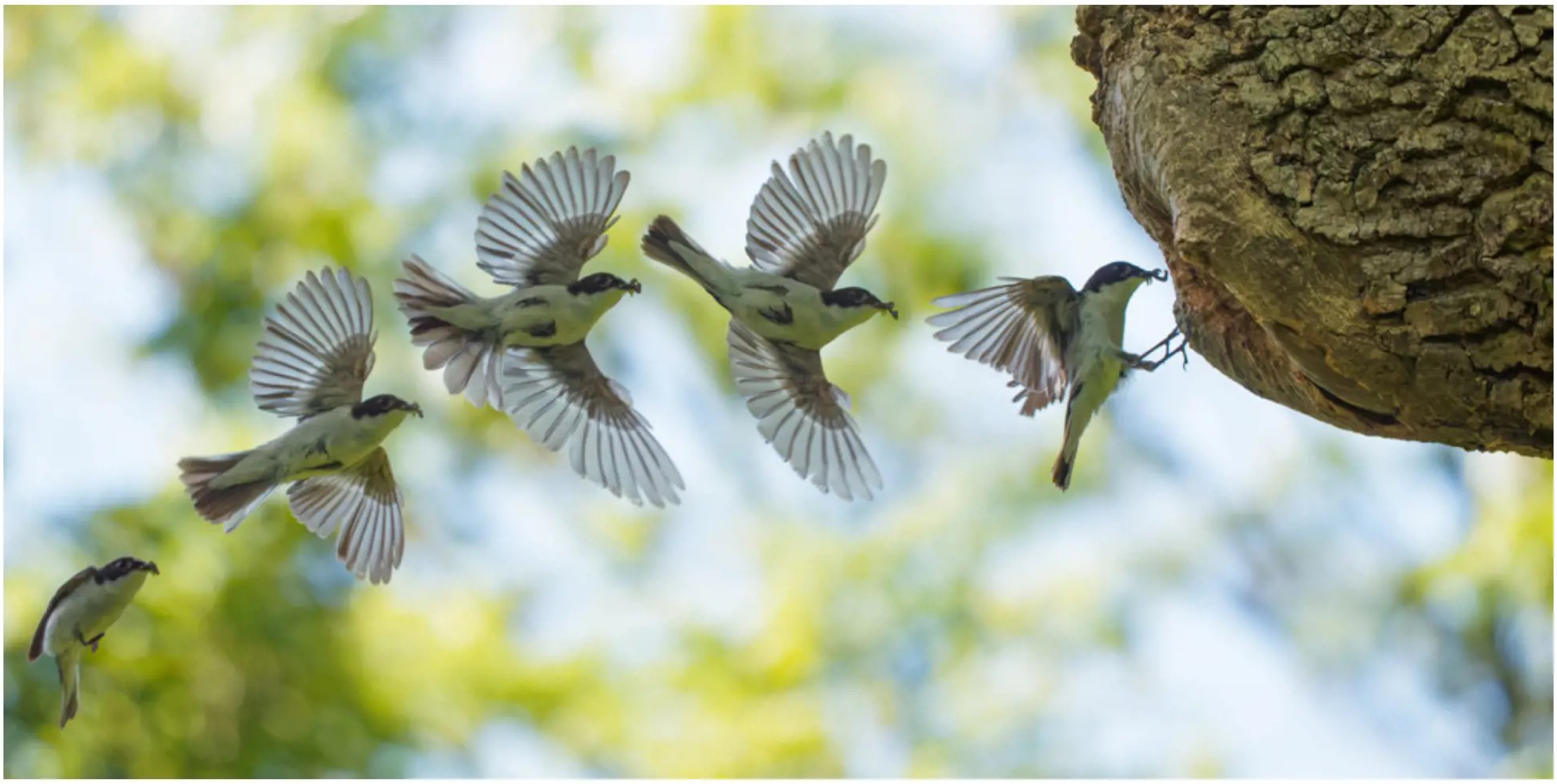
I have no problem using the word safari as I feel what I have captured is as worthy of celebrating and conserving as the wildlife of jungle, desert and plain.



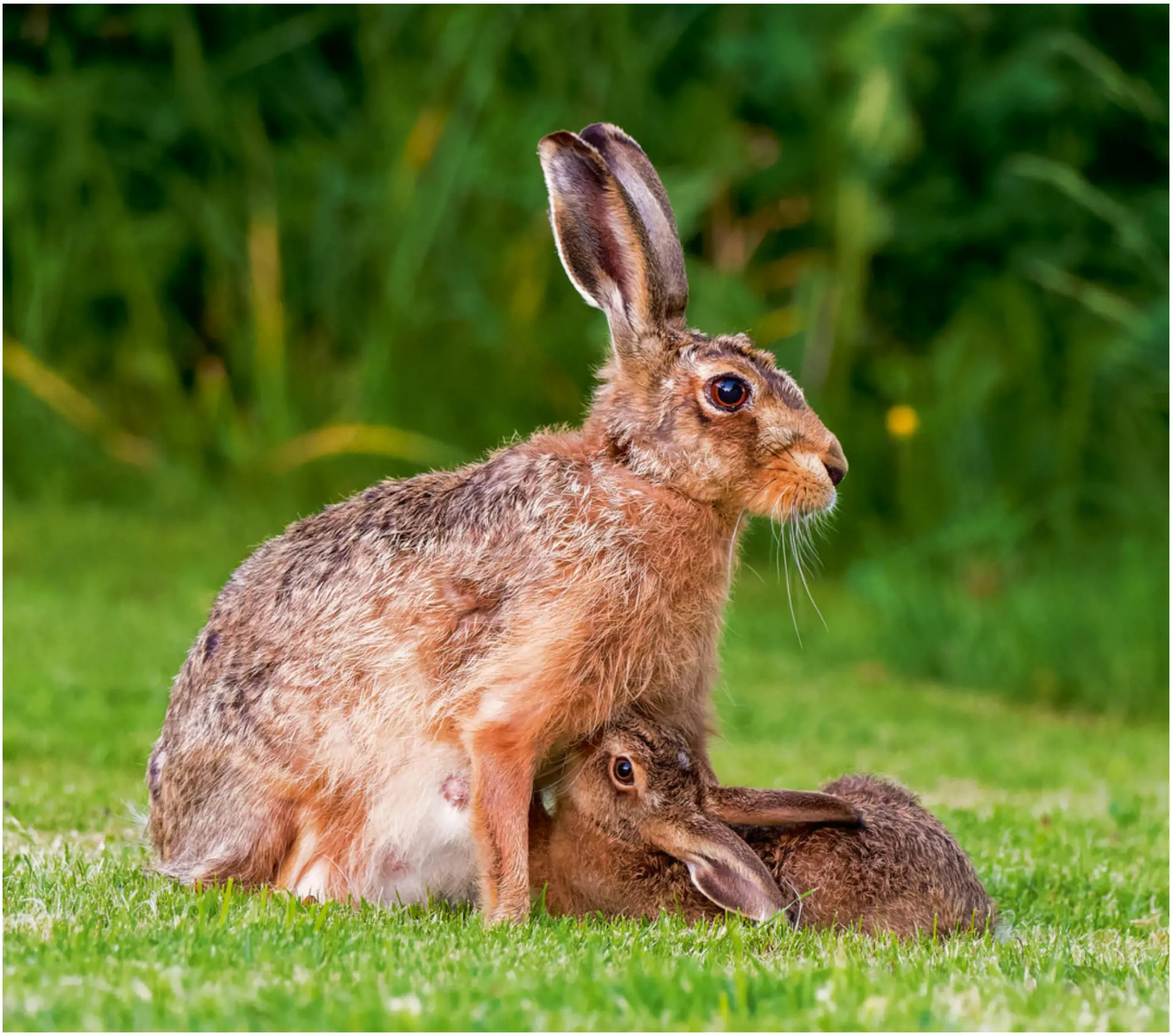

'Stunning photography...
Andrew makes the ordinary
look extraordinary.'
Iolo Williams
GARDEN SAFARI
Andrew Fusek Peters

Above, the cover of the book features a hare whose story continues in its pages. Below, banks of lavender showcase a busy bee in July. Right, Andrew stopped to catch this basking lizard in April sunshine.

Andrew photographs a mason bee in a dead tree trunk. Right, wren bringing one of last year's fallen leaves for this year's nest, in May: barn swallow in June. Elephant hawk moth on eryngium in August.

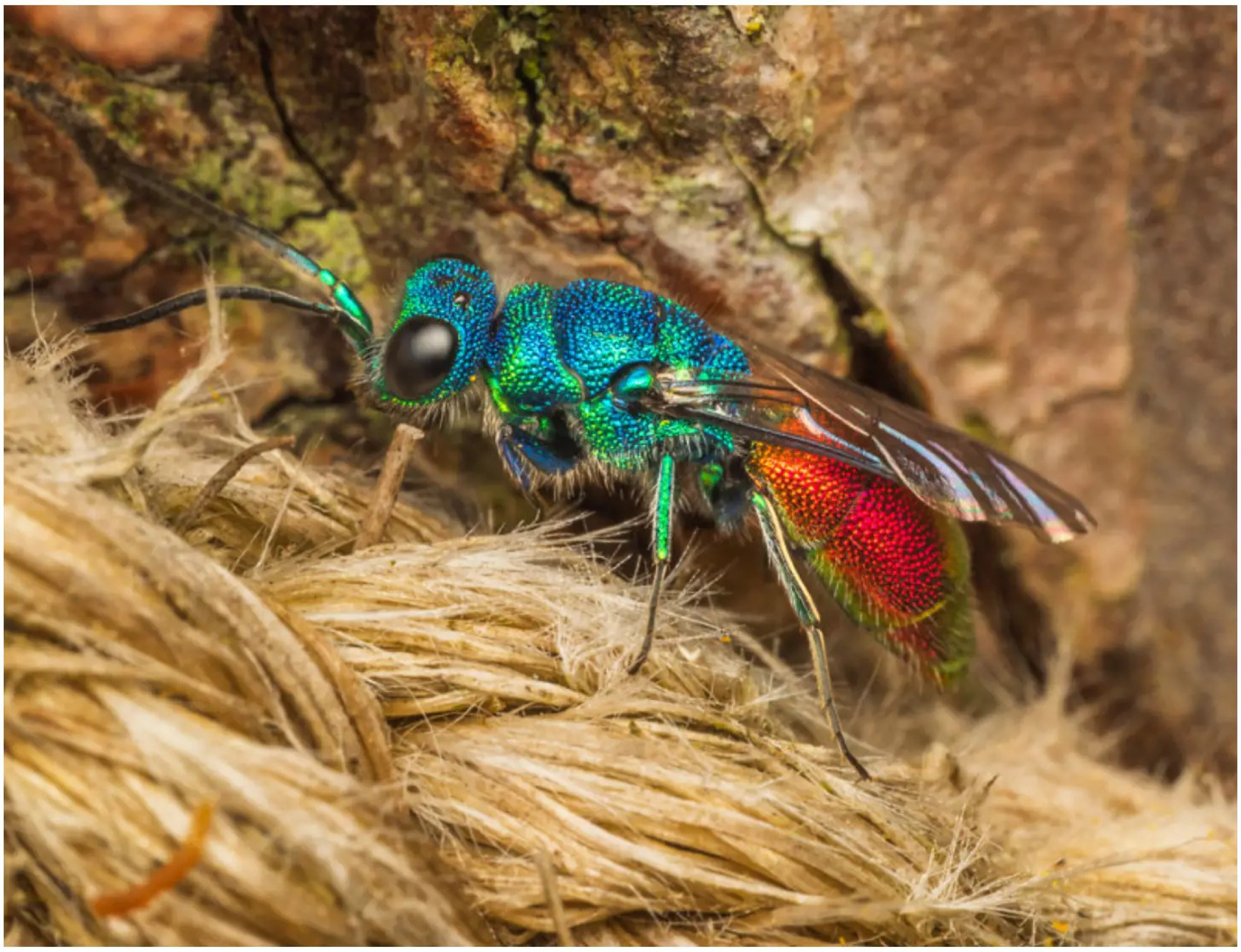


Above, male Pied Flycatcher bringing food to the nest – one of Andrew's signature OM-System stop action composite sequences.
Below, a rare shot of a Jill hare suckling her leveret in June, in a friend's garden in Shropshire.



"Richard's family have farmed a rolling green landscape near Much Wenlock for four generations. During work, he noticed something very interesting in the stump of an old black poplar and I have been invited to come and check it out. I am always deeply honoured to be allowed on farmland. The two fields below the house are gradually transforming into park land and there is more going on here than meets the eye. I park up at a safe distance so as not to disturb and lift my lens. Four kestrel chicks huddle out of the wind, rich brown and beige puffballs. My vehicle disguise is working. Farmers like Richard and Jackie have such an important role to play and their guardianship of species and land is bearing miraculous fruit. When I ring Richard a couple of days later, the stump is empty and the chicks have flown. I wish them well in their new life on the wing." (edited quote)

Garden Safari is published by Graffeg Books. Hardback, 208 pages, 250 x 250mm. Publication May 2025, ISBN 9781802587289. It can also be purchased as an edition for Kindle, iBookstore, and Ffolio. £30 (UK), $41 (US) delivery and taxes includes. To order your copy visit **graffeg.com** *Also see* ***fusekphotos.com*** *and* ***andrewfusekpeters*** *on FB/ Insta.*



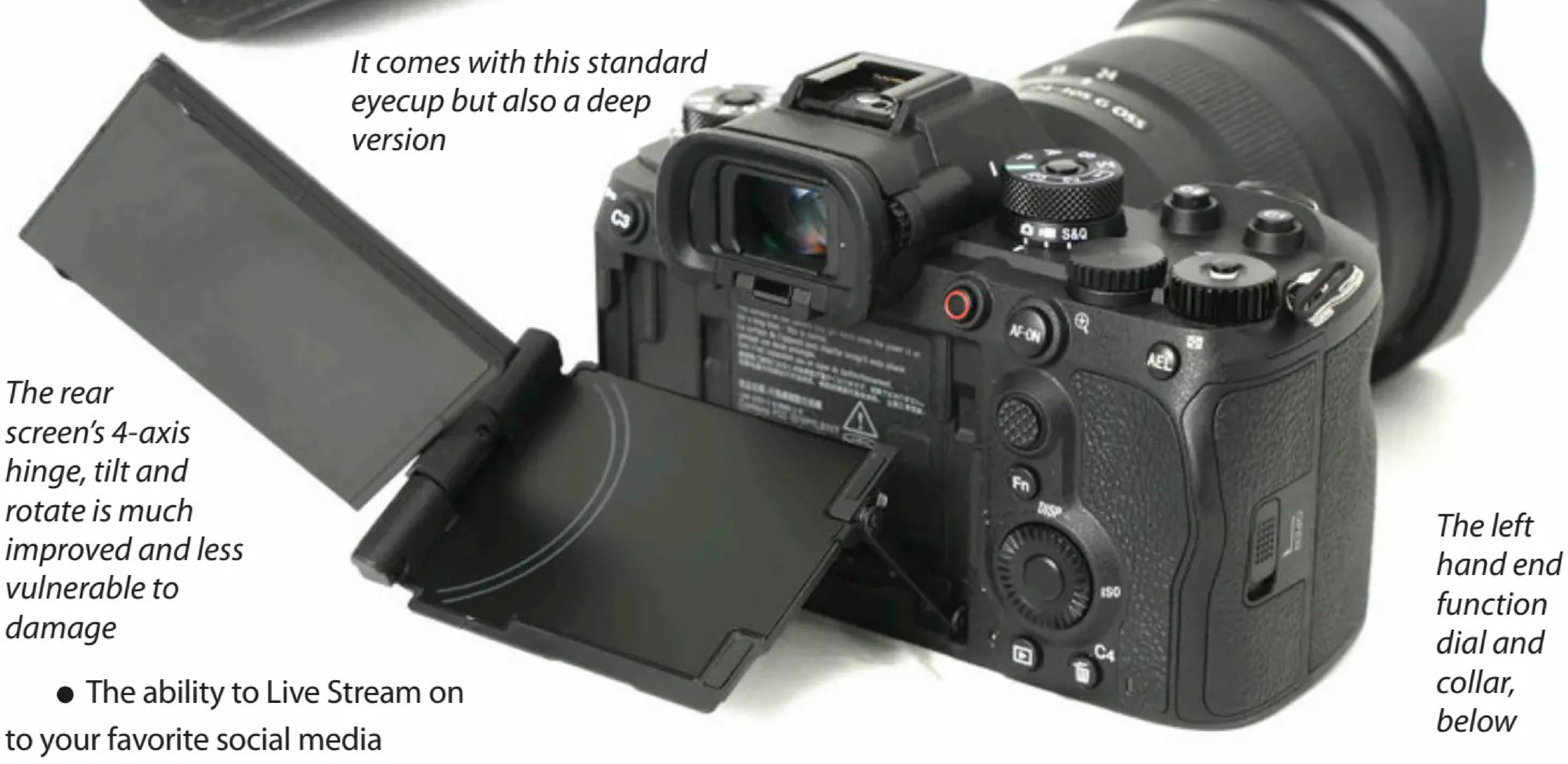
"Where there are mason bees, there are also parasitic wasps and one of the most stunning and vibrant of these is the ruby-tailed wasp", writes Andrew in the book. "This is jewellery on the move as these tiny wasps are never still, scrabbling over the dead stump and looking into every hole. Their strategy is cunning and brutal as a ruby-tailed wasp will break into the nesting chamber and lay its egg next to that of the mason bee. When the egg hatches, the wasp larva will eat the egg or larvae of the bee and then tuck into a pollen feast. They remain in the nest until fully developed and then emerge in spring as adult wasps. Hence their other name of cuckoo wasp."

by Gary Friedman

One to aspire to – the Sony A1 II

50MP with 30fps blackout-free shooting and pre-capture, and both memory card slots take either SD UHS-1/II or CFExpress 2.0 Type A

The 24-105mm G OSS can only use its own stabilisation, but non-OSS lenses like the 28-70mm ƒ2 get 8.5 stops from the in-body IS



It comes with this standard eyecup but also a deep version

The rear screen's 4-axis hinge, tilt and rotate is much improved and less vulnerable to damage

Owners of the original Sony A1 have been feeling neglected. When they bought it, it was one of the most advanced cameras on the planet – a 50 megapixel sensor which could shoot 8K video and have no blackout between frames when shooting continuously. A flash sync speed of 1/400s (with electronic shutter – that was a first!). And a feature to allow for image authentication – an important capability in this era of deepfakes and disinformation.

But Sony then started introducing features in newer cameras that didn't make it to the original A1 via firmware updates, and A1 owners were getting angry. Specifically, the subject recognition and tracking features introduced with the A7RV were never added to the A1. It wasn't technically possible; for these image recognition features required what Sony calls an "AI chip" and a secure microprocessor that wasn't included in the original A1 hardware, so a firmware update to add these features wasn't possible.

So now with the A1 II, A1 owners finally have the camera body that everyone has been asking for! In fact, Sony has done one better – the A1 II is the first camera that has automatic subject type selection – no longer must you menu-dive to tell the camera what kind of animal or subject you want it to track. The camera can recognize subjects and make the selection automatically.

I could rattle off a list of new features, but if you're interested in this camera you probably know about them all already:

- The same 50 MP sensor which dpreview had praised in the original A1
- Pre-capture, where the camera shoots continuously and saves images up to one second before the shutter release is actually pressed.
- Pixel-shift multi-shoot that you can use handheld(ly)
- A better screen hinge (that was my biggest complaint about the original A1)
- The ability to Live Stream on to your favorite social media platform
- Can upload your images to Sony's Cloud service automatically (and by extension Google Drive and Lightroom via Adobe cloud) via Wi-Fi or tethered to your smartphone
- Image authentication (still not available for mere mortals, even if you're writing a book on the camera and can issue them press credentials)

Then there are the parlor tricks:

- The Auto Framing feature, where you put your camera on a tripod in the back of a room and it zooms in and follows the lecturer as he or she wanders around as you shoot video.
- The Framing Stabilizer feature, which does almost the same thing – it tries to keep the identified subject in the same place in the frame as it moves around.

This camera is so refined that there's really nothing to report on in terms of handling in daily use – the camera is fast, responsive, the buttons have great tactile feedback, and it's infinitely customizable. In other words, it met all expectations and there were no surprises.

Well, there was one surprise: how well this camera (and the original A1) had sold. It was heralded as the best camera for shooting sports due to its outstanding subject tracking and blackout-free viewfinder when shooting continuously. "Sports photographers are a dying breed," I said to myself, "since today everyone just shoots 8K video and takes freeze frames. They'll probably sell six of these cameras."

Boy was I wrong. It turns out that the demographic for this camera is people who only want the best of everything and at US$6.5K/£6.3K they have to have a lot of disposable income as well. You know, like dentists and enthusiastic amateurs… and me! Having just finished writing an e-book on this camera, I'll definitely be keeping mine.

The left hand end function dial and collar, below

AF-S
AF-C
DMF
MF
BRK

Order Gary's A1 II book at
www.FriedmanArchives.com/A1ii
Buy A1 II from WEX, UK stockist:
https://tidd.ly/4lP9Bld

SONY
E-mount
α
1
C5

Most aspects of the A1 II will be familiar to Sony A7 series owners. The body mount was upgraded from four screws to six from the A7/A7R III onwards.

FE 4/24-105 G OSS
SONY
C2
C1
OFF
ON
α1 II
MENU

The overall build quality of the A1 II is more substantial even than the A7RV, without being bulky. Control dials offer many more options without going into menus or needing to use the screen or finder to change main settings. The interfaces (bottom right) include full size everything from Ethernet to HDMI.

C3
MENU
AF-ON
AEL
Fn
DISP
ISO
C4

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Samyang 135mm ƒ1.8 AF

There's competition now in a lens specification which has been popular for a century

Thanks to Jason and Vanessa at WEX Edinburgh we were able to take the Samyang 135mm ƒ1.8 FE AF for a brief spin on Leith Walk, which is pretty good for people watching on a sunny warm day. Hopes of a Viltrox LAB lens with the same spec arriving in stock came to nothing, but after even half an hour with the Samyang two things were clear.

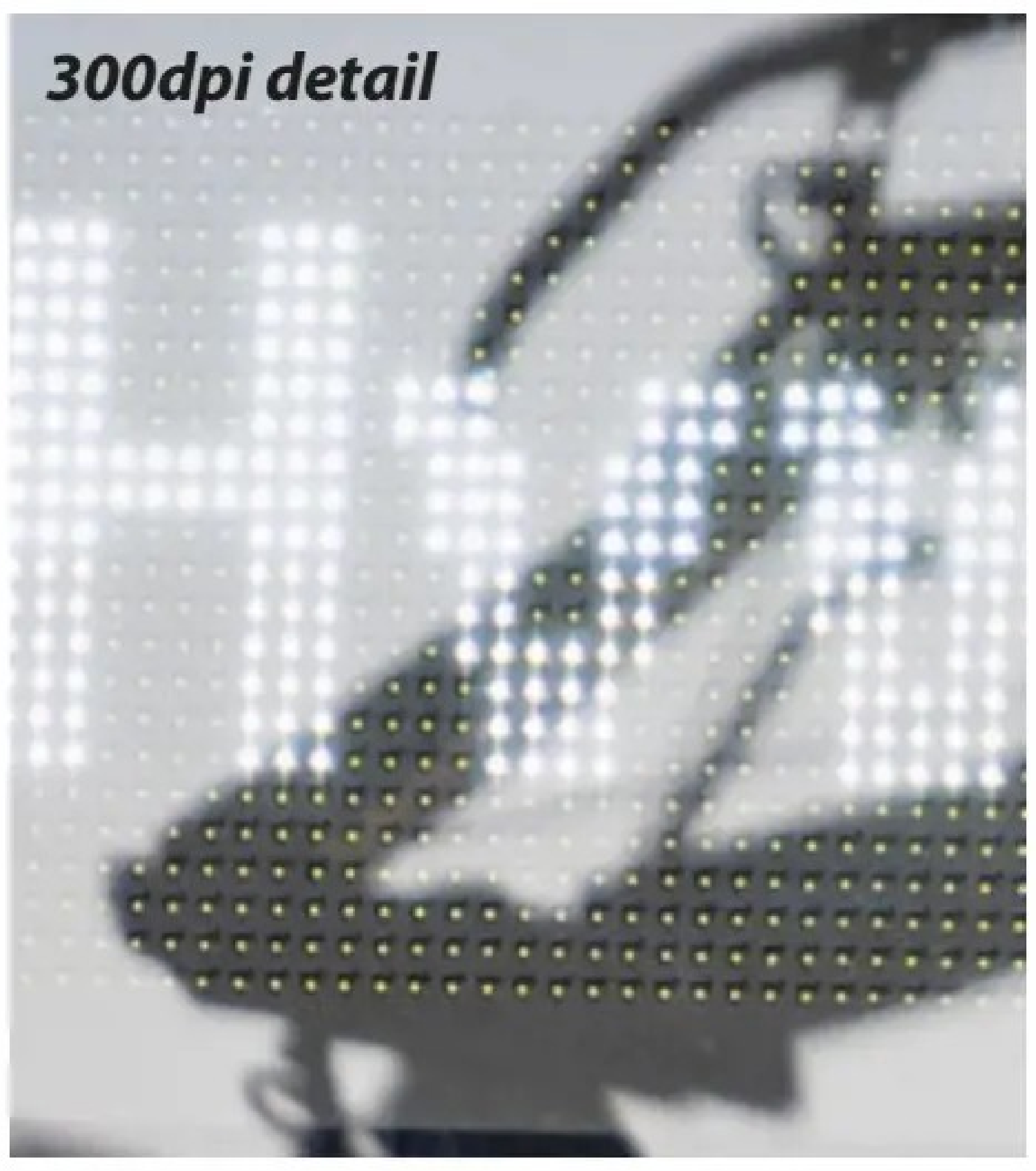
First, 135mm ƒ1.8 is a brilliant spec just as it was 50 years ago when Soligor put one on the market for popular SLR fittings – or 100 years ago when Ernemann made one for Ihagee, covering quarterplate on a far more exclusive kind of SLR – an Ernostar brother to the fast lens which gave Dr Erich Salomon his candids of Nazi German cabinet meetings.

Second, it's often as heavy as it was in the 1920s or 1970s! However, Samyang's lens is surprisingly light at 772g and the Viltrox competitor weighs in at 1,300g as well as being significantly larger. The Viltrox is a flagship lens in terms of optics and AF, at the expense of bulk.

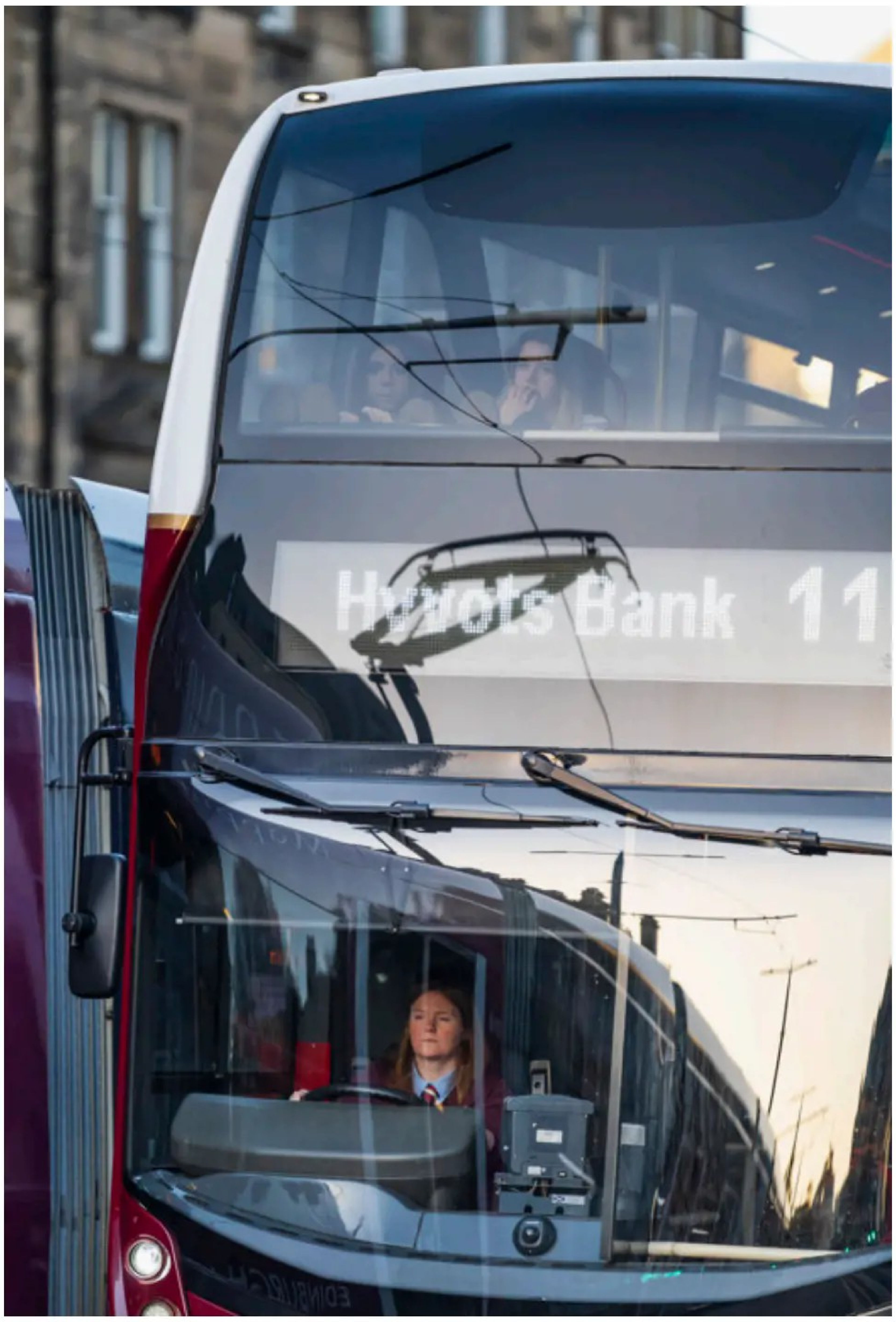
Initially, the Viltrox was also much more expensive, and seems to have fallen in price at £685. The Samyang has been reduced to a competitive £674 from £798. WEX as we went to press had a 'last few remaining' which could mean a Version 2 is on the way.

It focuses down to 69cm and better than 0.25X scale, 3cm closer than Viltrox, 1cm closer than the £1,400 Sony GM (950g) and much closer than the well-proven Sigma 135mm ƒ1.8 DG HSM's 88cm (1,200g). It's just 93 x 130mm and takes 82mm filters.It's hard to fault performance as it's crystal-sharp at full bore, focuses as well as you set up the AF prefs, and has a lovely smooth defocused rendering, plus an Astro-Focus function with LED, focus hold button, custom switches for presets, weatherproofing and AF range limiter. – *DK*

For WEX link to this lens see: **https://tidd.ly/3YtbDUc**



300dpi detail



The bus, with no time to register whether any faces could be seen, was frozen at 1/1000s at ƒ1.8, IASO 400, when moving. This is half the full horizontal frame. It's possible to read the ticket machine serial number. Cyclists, cars, pedestrians at close range – all were sharply focused at full aperture. The friendly manager at the Brunswick Book Club (a bistro over the road from WEX) has sharp eye focus at ƒ1.8 (ISO 3200) but not enough depth of field at close range. The cyclist, also wide open, shows the bokeh at this distance.

BRUNSWICK PLACE
BRUNSWICK
BOOK CLUB

Lexar Armor tough SC cards

Premium cards with a full metal jacket promise long life – but check your slots…

ARMOR
SDXC UHS-II
128GB
280 MB/s READ
210 MB/s WRITE
V60 6K
STAINLESS STEEL
GOLD
Lexar

ARMOR
128GB
280 MB/s
210 MB/s
Lexar
G61248

Lexar
64
Lexar PROFESSIONAL
1000x

Above, the Armor Gold compared to Lexar 1000X. The thickness is identical but the Armor was 200 microns wider. Left, the Armor with its label-free print on the metal casing, next to Delkin's Black 'tough' card – its label (and serial number) worn away by use. Bottom, the Lexar Professional reader proved to give the fastest test results.

We were privileged to receive samples of the new Lexar Armor Gold SDXC UHS-II cards in time to use them with the Fujifilm and Leica cameras reviewed in this issue.

The 'house card' of choice has been a Delkin Tough Black of similar specification, when not using regular new series Lexar 1000X and 2000X cards or a very fast if small Sandisk 280MB/s. The Delkin card claim 300MB/s and to put it in context despite now being a few years on the market costs more than the new Lexar Armor Gold (64GB for much the same price as Lexar's 128GB).

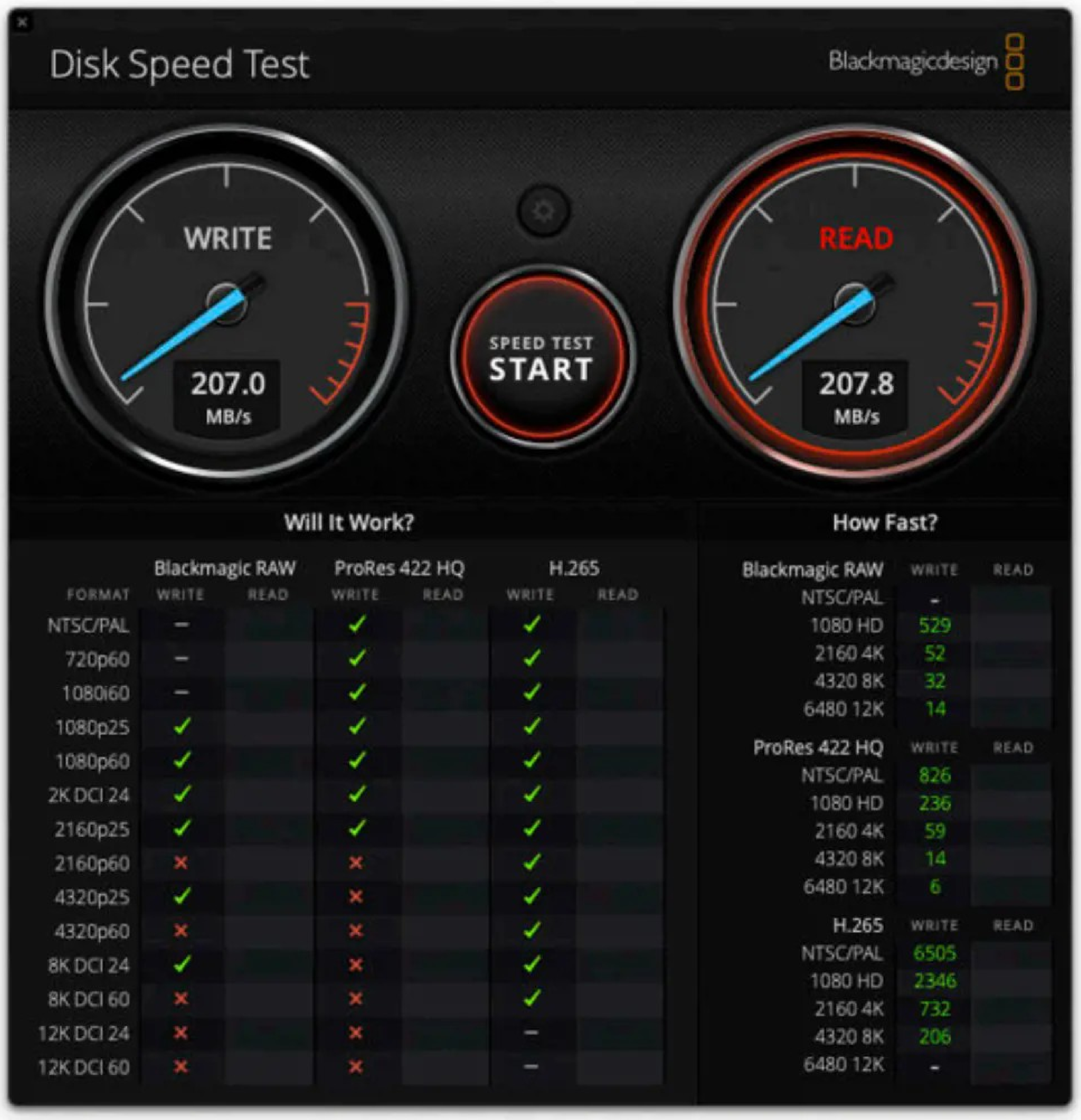
The Lexar card claims 210MB/s write and 280MB/s read, written on the packaging and on the card. In practical tests using the Lexar Professional Multi-Card 3-in-1 USB 3.1 reader on a front (10GB) USB 3.1 G2 port of the Apple M2 Studio Max, and the built-in SD reader of an M1 MacBook Pro, working speeds were in the 200-210MB/s range, with write sometimes slower than read but often matched depending on which camera the card was formatted in. Much the dame applied to the Delkin cards with the same Blackmagic Disk Speed Test parameters.

This utility is aimed at testing camera attached SSDs with the phenomenal speeds needed to record Blackmagic or ProRes fast frame rate 8K and even 12K movie takes. It measures 12K shooting even assuming this could be done with the internal H.265 encoding.

Well, no card was rated fast enough for 8K DCI 60 but even our regular Lexar Professional 1000X with its nominal 150MN/s speed tested as able to handle normal in-camera recording of UHD 4320p at 60fps – 6K at 24fps is claimed for the Armor. The speed test confirmed that the Armor Gold has the rating it claims, relative to other cards and their claimed speeds.

However, that's not what this card is all about. It is clad in stainless steel, not plastic, and has no fragile ribs (septums) dividing the contact zones (and breaking off inside the camera's card slot all too often). What was ever the purpose of those five tiny thin walls sticking up from the card? It was not as if insulation required it.

The steel shell of the card made itself known by immediately clinging to the magnetised zone of our MacBook Pro's top just below the keyboard near the SD slot.



Will It Work?

	Blackmagic RAW		ProRes 422 HQ		H.265	
FORMAT	WRITE	READ	WRITE	READ	WRITE	READ
NTSC/PAL	–		✓		✓	
720p60	–		✓		✓	
1080i60	–		✓		✓	
1080p25	✓		✓		✓	
1080p60	✓		✓		✓	
2K DCI 24	✓		✓		✓	
2160p25	✓		✓		✓	
2160p60	✕		✕		✓	
4320p25	✓		✕		✓	
4320p60	✕		✕		✓	
8K DCI 24	✓		✕		✓	
8K DCI 60	✕		✕		✓	
12K DCI 24	✕		✕		–	
12K DCI 60	✕		✕		–	

How Fast?

Blackmagic RAW	WRITE	READ
NTSC/PAL	-	
1080 HD	529	
2160 4K	52	
4320 8K	32	
6480 12K	14	
ProRes 422 HQ	**WRITE**	**READ**
NTSC/PAL	826	
1080 HD	236	
2160 4K	59	
4320 8K	14	
6480 12K	6	
H.265	**WRITE**	**READ**
NTSC/PAL	6505	
1080 HD	2346	
2160 4K	732	
4320 8K	206	
6480 12K	-	

Test results for Armor Gold 128GB in Mac M2 Studio Max with Lexar Professional reader – good for all H.265 movies except 12K. On Sony A7RV at Hi+, >50 lossless compressed .ARWs, unlimited L 60MP X.Fine JPEGs.

Remember, this is not a magnetic medium like a hard disc or a tape, the field can not affect the bits and bytes stored in its memory.

The cards do have a slight heat sink effect when the camera gets warm. This can only do good. They can take 37X the destructive force needed to break most cards, and are IP68 dust and water resistant – immersion for 30 minutes at 1.5m depth, or lying on the ground in a rain shower for example. Since it is far more likely, we put a card in a laundry bag with a few items and ran a 15 minute 30° wash with detergent then tumble dried. Emerged perfect – and clean! SD cards are so light that the drop test hardly matters, but 'treading on after dropping' definitely does.

They have no write-protection switch which means you should never encounter accidental locking off when inserting a card quickly. These cards are a tight fit. All SD slots in various computers worked well except the M2 Studio Max. Pushed fully home, no card was detected. Pulling the card out by 0.75mm to a slight 'click' position made the connection, but with under half the expected write/read speed. The external Lexar Professional card reader and the SD slot in the MacBook Pro were glitch-free and both gave test speeds around 200MB/s.

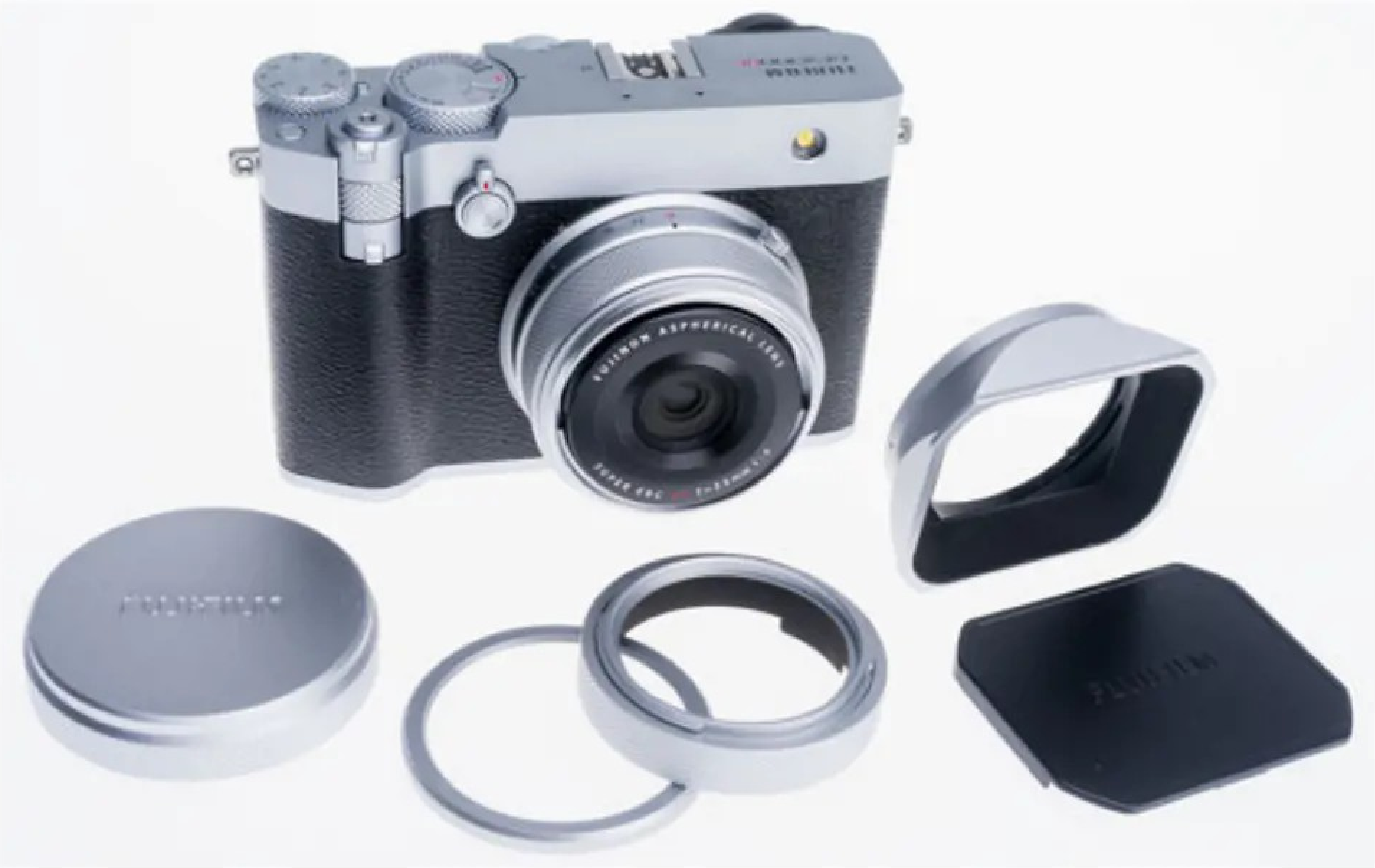
Whether we blame the card design or the Mac's card reader, just be sure to test each device they will be used in.

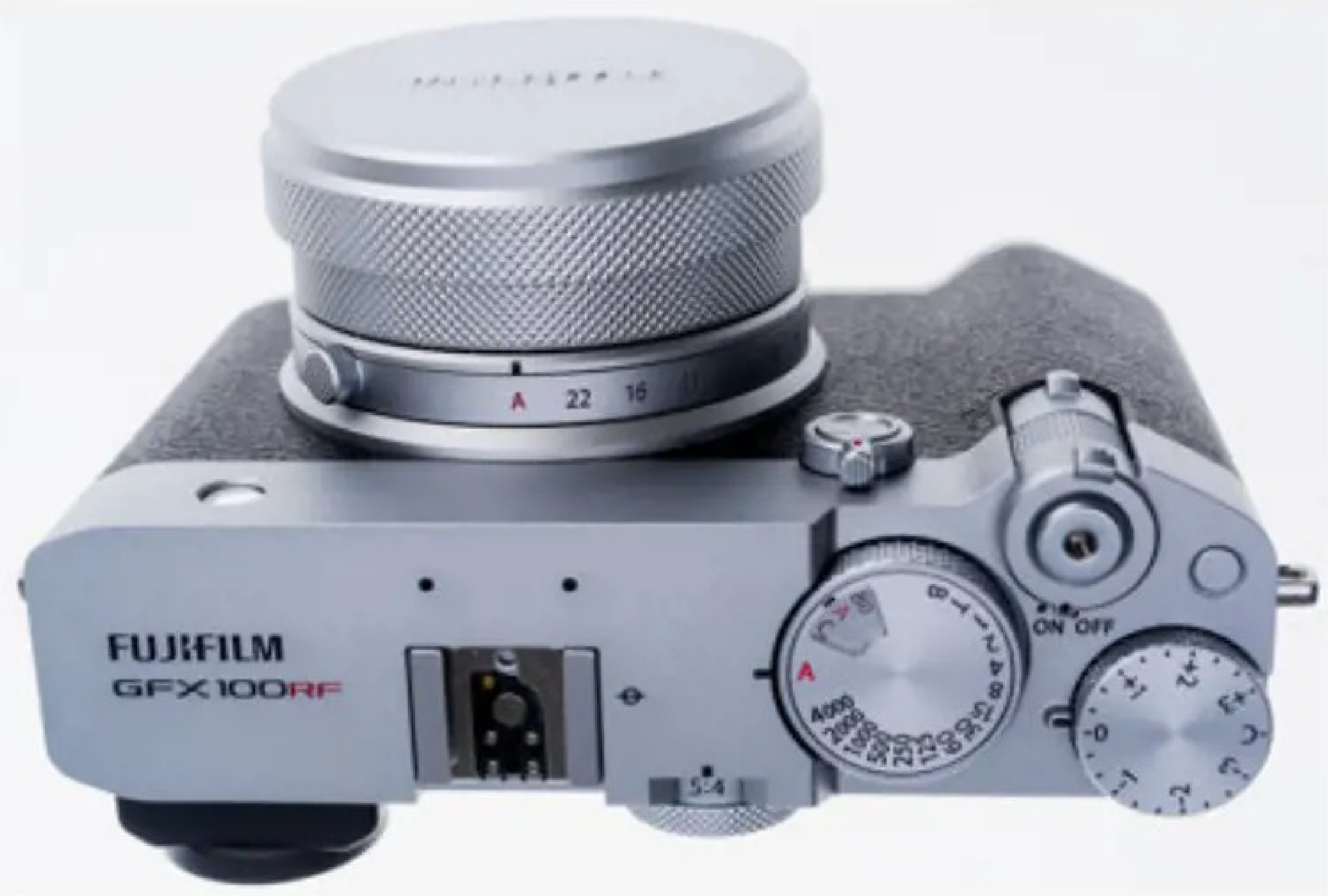
Buy the 128GB card:
WEX: **https://tidd.ly/4iDBJLy**
Amazon: **https://amzn.to/4jCVyE0**

MEDIUM FORMAT

by David Kilpatrick

Fujifilm GFX100RF – all in one, and one for all





The complete kit (apart from the provided plain filter) includes a filter/lenshood adaptor, rectangular hood and flat hood cap. Top right, tilting rear screen. Left, the scroll roller and digital converter toggle switch below the shutter button and on/off switch are easy to operate accidentally.

If you like physical controls and the feel of fine engineering, you'll fall in love with the fixed lens medium format Fujifilm GFX100RF. It looks, handles and performs unlike any other and my brief acquaintance with it only scratches the surface. That may not be the right term, as this camera has a 'machined from solid' aluminium housing with a surface treatment which should look as good in a decade as it does now.

It's a pity our sample was missing its flash shoe cover as that completes the design. Every dial, wheel and roller is finely knurled. Below the shutter release is a roller you can turn, a cylindrical pillar with the on/off switch above and a left-right toggle below it. You can customise functions, but out of the box the roller scrolls through nine image ratios and the bottom toggle further changes the crop with four lens simulations.

There's another toggle lever (with a red mark) to move between EVF and rear screen viewing. A smaller roller with pushbutton function falling under your thumb positions the AF area, a rear top plate mounted dial gives an alternative way to set the default format ratio on power up, and on the top in the usual position is a shutter speed dial with lift and drop ISO setting collar (80-8,000, expandable to 40-102,400).

Most of this could be accomplished using the screen or EVF and menu settings. Instead this camera reasserts Fujifilm's affinity for real controls as found in other GFX, the X100 and X-Pro ranges.

It is most akin to the X100 models, including a choice of silver or black finish. It's also not much bigger despite the 33 x 44mm sensor. The X100VI is larger than its APS-C sensor predecessors because of the sensor stabilisation, and the GFX100S II is fairly large for the same reason. IBIS adds about 1cm all round to a sensor assembly. The GFX100RF has no form of stabilisation, optical or sensor based, except a digital type dependent on a crop which can be activated for shooting the 4K and lesser movie formats. I did not test movie shooting, and also didn't experiment with the interesting multi-exposure function.

For me, this camera came as more of a digital reprise of the classic Fuji GA645 rollfilm autofocus camera. It also manages to cover the role played by the G690 and G670 'giant Leica' models, and the G617 panoramic 120 rollfilm camera which shot a 55 x 165mm format using a 105mm lens.

Switch the GFX100RF to its 17:6 ratio, and the 35mm ƒ4 Fujinon Super EBC lens gives exactly the same panoramic view (see top right example). The JPEGs produced are cropped, and the raw .RAF files get an embedded sidecar file which makes *Lightroom*, *Bridge*, *Camera Raw* and other software preview and open them using the crop seen in the viewfinder. You can cancel this and access the entire 4:3 ratio image instead of the 17:6 – or the 65:24 (XPan), 16:9, 3:2, 5:4, 7:6 and 1:1 options as well as a vertical 'half frame' 3:4 ideal for portraits without holding the camera vertically. It's still more than half the 102MP sensor!

With movie/audio functions similar to the X100VI, dual SD UHS-II card slots, CPU and screen/EVF similar to the GFX100S II I'll refer readers back to my reviews of these for other evaluation. Part of the appeal of the GFX100RF is that it's very familiar in detail and functions for any dedicated Fujifilm shooter. It offers all the same film simulations such as the ACROS+R red filtered BW, Velvia and Astia all of which I used at different times during this trial.

The lens

What's very different is the 35mm ƒ4 fixed lens. It is not really comparable to the fixed 23mm ƒ2 of the X100 series, though some will claim ƒ2 on APS-C 'equals' ƒ4 on 33 x 44mm MF. That only holds true for depth of field, and then only for an identical pixel count determining the print or monitoring viewing conditions. This lens is similar to a 26 to 28mm in field of view depending on whether you use the full 4:3 sensor ratio or crop to 3:2 35mm shape, where the X100 series lens is like a 35mm semi-wide on 35mm.

It's a surprisingly simple 10-element 8-group inverted retrofocus with just two aspherical elements. Like lenses which pioneered this design in 1990s luxury compacts and later digital reprises, it uses a large element close to the sensor. It's more or less a giant Ricoh GR despite Fujifilm pedigree.

Despite the EBC coating, which I first encountered creating unrivalled flare-freedom in a 1975 55mm ƒ2.2 EBC Fujinon which

used only five elements, the internal leaf shutter and iris combine with the lens design and probably also the sensor to produce some distinct flare patterns when shooting with a light source in the frame. These become dramatic from ƒ11 to ƒ22, resembling a diffraction grating or special effect rainbow star filter.

Fortunately the lens performance at ƒ4 is impeccable and using wider apertures can kill this flare, with the benefit of a 4X ND filter option inside the lens and the 1/4,000s fast leaf shutter speed or the electronic extreme of 1/16,000s. Flash sync works up to 1/2,000s or 1/4,000s depending on aperture.There's no PC sync terminal, the flash shoe is your only connection.

Putting all this together with finely engineered focus and aperture rings (to 20cm, and third stop soft detents) we get a masterpiece of compact lens design on this larger format. Unscrew a front trim, fit the supplied 49mm filter on the bayonet lens hood adaptor and the camera becomes weather-sealed. Add the machined rectangular lens hood with its deep matt black inner and aluminium outer skins, and a supplied slide-on front cap completes the rig. The slide-on design could very easily be used to make a dedicated filter holder for grads or effects (hint to Fujifilm).

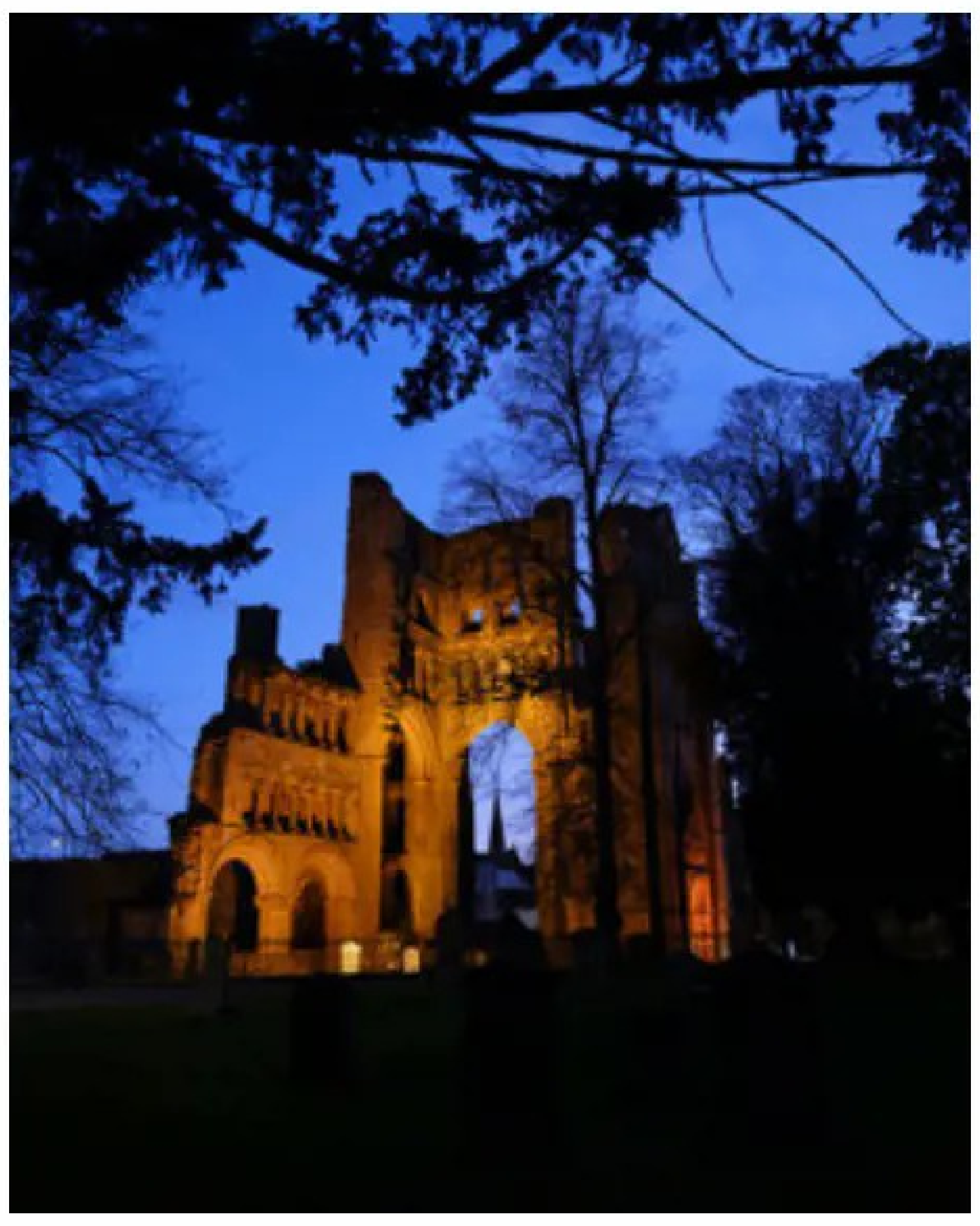
It's difficult to fault the lens when you see in-camera JPEGs. The Super Fine option is so good, and the exposure so accurate, you might never need to shoot raw. At ISO 200, the deepest shadow detail on a JPEG can be pulled up with extreme levels adjustment in *Photoshop* and show no excessive noise or tone breaks. An underexposed JPEG from this sensor is almost as good as .RAF for post-processing.

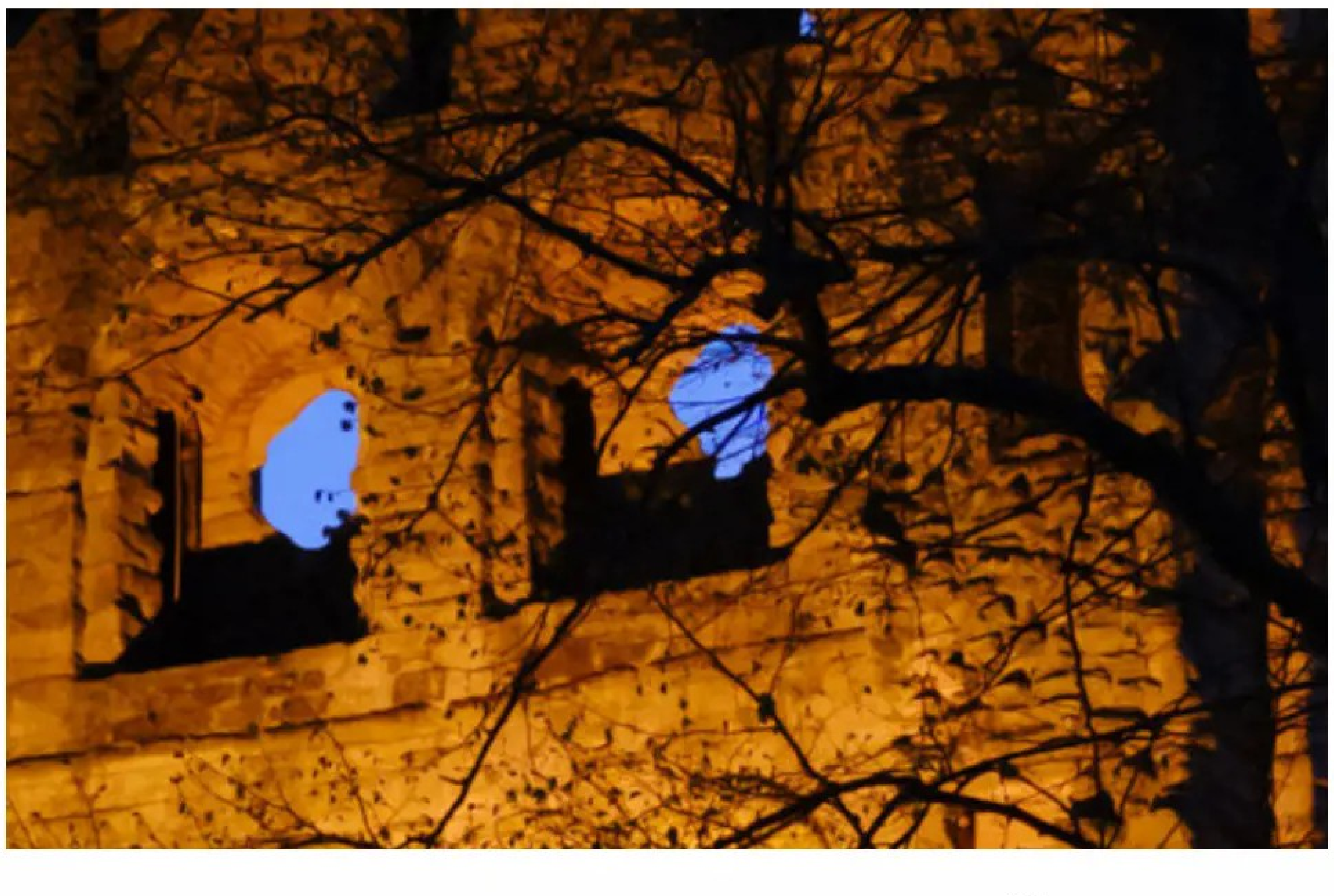
Handling and controls

It's just as well that using the two cards to record the raw and JPEG gives you the best backup, film simulations (with EVF/screen preview) and cropped results. You can set the digital zoom to 35mm, 45mm, 50mm or 80mm in addition to those format ratios. If raw is recorded, in-camera processing

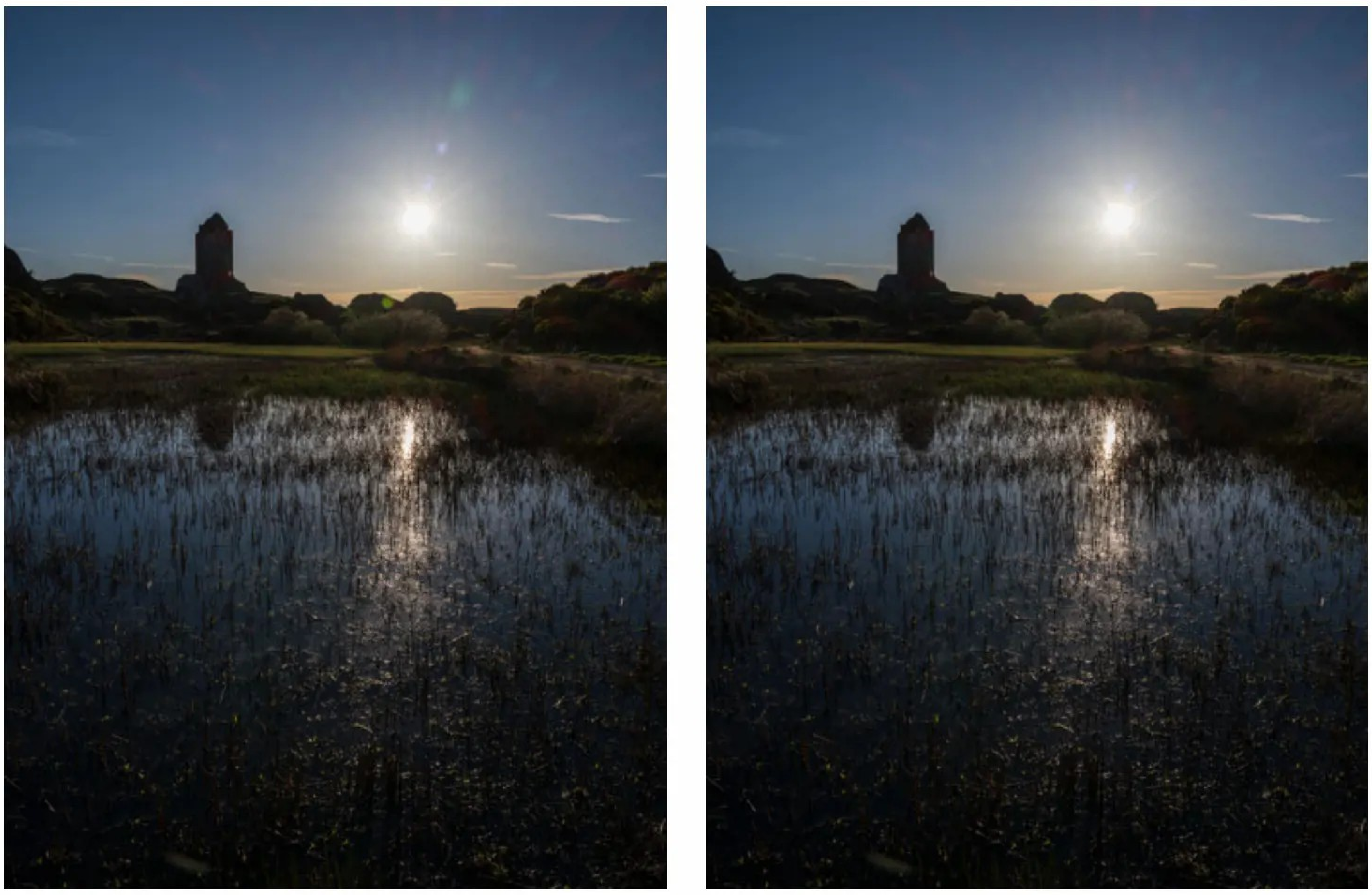
The GFX100RF feels like a camera you should be using to take picture-postcard views, calendar stock in the old sense. It's ideal for this because with no temptation to carry additional lenses it can go anywhere. The view of the 35mm lens on 33 x 44mm is similar to a 28mm on 35mm, a 45mm on 6 x 4.5 or a 65mm on 6 x 9cm. Top, a 17:6 panoramic from the full width of the sensor, similar to a 165mm x 65mm frame. Crop below left, 2048 pixels wide, Facebook full size and also good for a half page repro, of the central focus on an unexpected e-tricyclist. Bottom right, a picture postcard subject until you view at 100% and see a bright metal standpipe in front of the wider bridge pillar and flood debris on the bank.

Below: a hand-held 1/50s at ƒ4.5, ISO 8,000, processed from raw with NR50 – pin sharp, no visible noise. Detail reproduced at 300dpi.





It looks a simple shot, but meant finding exactly the right lens position to place lit rock and grass or gorse against shaded parts, put the tower above the middle distance crag, and stand for a stable hand-held shot where a tripod would have been very difficult to set up. The compact form of the GFX100RF is ideal for scrambling around the landscape looking for viewpoint and light. Depth of field is exactly as needed shooting at ISO 200 and ƒ9 for a 1/80s shutter speed. The lack of stabilisation never seemed to cause lost sharpness under these conditions.



The 35mm ƒ4 Fujinon EBC can be used in adverse light with few problems, but placing a full sun in the frame above at ƒ14 produced faint flare patches you can see in the left example above. A quick retouch in Photoshop dealt with the main ones but faint multiple ones remained. They can be seen below even stronger at ƒ22 with a rainbow diffraction effect in this frame with more overall exposure, and more sky and highlight adjustment. To use, or to lose?

allows application of all these settings later on. Sit down with the camera and a coffee, use the 5.7 million pixel EVF to view the results, and save a new JPEG.

Cropping, whether in-camera or later, provides great scope despite the fixed wide-angle lens. The 45mm digital onverter setting crops to exactly 35mm full frame bar the 4:3 ratio, and at 62MP closely matches the Sony A7RV with a 35mm lens. The 63mm crop gives a 50mm view with 31MP file and the 80mm a 20MP file with 63mm view. For best quality, an A4 print needs a 10MP+ image. One ninth of the full GFX picture is good enough for this, an effective 3X 'converter' giving a 105mm view though you must do this in post, there's no camera setting.

When using the digital converter, the entire EVF or screen is filled by the cropped image. This leads on to the issue of ergonomics and those wonderfully engineered controls.

Check your change

After a few sorties out with the GFX I noticed that the digital converter and the format ratio had a tendency to be wrongly set. The greyed out non-image areas of the finder view meant accidental nudging of the ratio was not a huge problem, but changing the crop and the angle of view was.

When picking up the camera whether turning it on or just lifting it to the eye from neck-strap hanging, I was all too often touching the front roller and the digital converter (crop) toggle switch because both fall naturally under the right hand fingers. It's an issue a long-term owner would learn to live with, avoided by turning the camera on only after lifting it to the eye, or by customising functions.

The most common thing was to think – "that's not a 28mm view!" after moving to the intended shooting position. It was nearly always a 35mm view, the first change when moving the toggle switch. Sometimes I failed to realise and took a perfectly good 62MP or 31MP shot, and in a few cases like the house shown in the examples dealing with lens distortion and profile on the facing page I intended a 35mm view (no drainpipe) but used the full 28mm angle when processing from raw. Nothing was ever lost, except perhaps some resolution I probably did not need.

Since startup is not instant, you may leave the camera switched on – but this doesn't make a huge difference. To wake it up, first pressure on the shutter button is needed, the wake-up time is no faster than switching on from cold. It's also very easy to take an accidental frame – I got more than a few.

I often found that picking the camera up by its right hand end in my right hand turned it on anyway as that switch also tends to get caught.

There is another point Fujifilm could address – the question of M and S size true raw files. Sony offers this with 26 and 15MP alternatives to 60MP. I don't often use these, because tests have shown little or no benefit when it might be expected at high ISO settings. Sony raw files are big enough at around 80Mb. However with the 102MP GFX, raw files are over 200Mb and even the Super Fine JPEGs come in around 60Mb, with cropped ratio or digital converter use greatly reducing this, while always leaving raws full size.

If you shoot raw *Bridge/LR* will mark frames cropped and/or digitally converted with a symbol identical to the one seen after processing. Only after previewing can you revert to see the whole raw frame and re-crop.

Shake down

The shutter has so little vibration that shots taken at speeds like 1/60s were critically sharp every time (bar subject movement) and those in the 1/8s-1/30s almost always as good. For me the watershed seemed to be anything longer than 1/8s.

It's a camera for extremes, with ƒ22 plus 4XND entering ƒ64 territory. The sensor doesn't suffer badly from diffraction loss as it has no AA filter. It can shoot at 6fps (3fps only on electronic shutter) for a burst of nearly 300 JPEGs.

As for the battery life, it's good that it is over 800 raw captures, twice as many as most full frame high res competitors. I charged in camera as no charger was provided, and never needed to change the battery mid-day. I used the latest Lexar Armor SDXC UHS-II card in slot 1, and a provided standard Lexar in slot 2. Reviewing, deleting, formatting and in-camera operations were fast, as was transferring small JPEGs to my iPhone. Using a new Fujifilm App, geolocation was recorded from the phone reliably with the camera connection renewed.

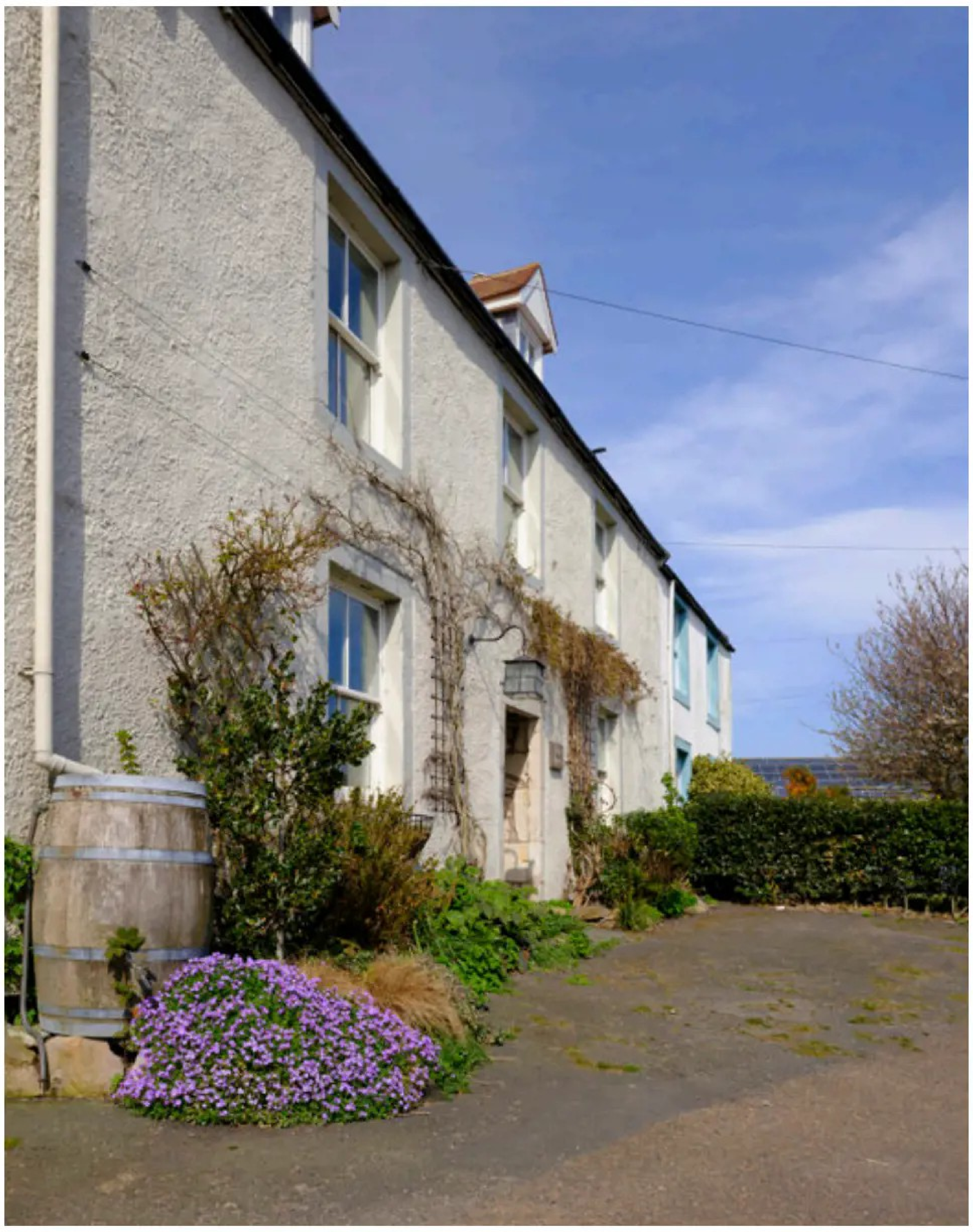
Although it has been called a 'compact' and tipped for street shooting, it's more of a travel and landscape choice. The level of detail revealed when you zoom in on a 100% view will have you magically erasing gum off paving, crisp bags from hedgerows and bad pointing on brickwork. Sure, it would not distract even on a 20 x 16" print but this sensor is good for prints 40 x 30" viewed with a magnifying glass.

The £4,700 SRP seems high but it's the lowest cost way to get that 100 million 16-bit pixel look.

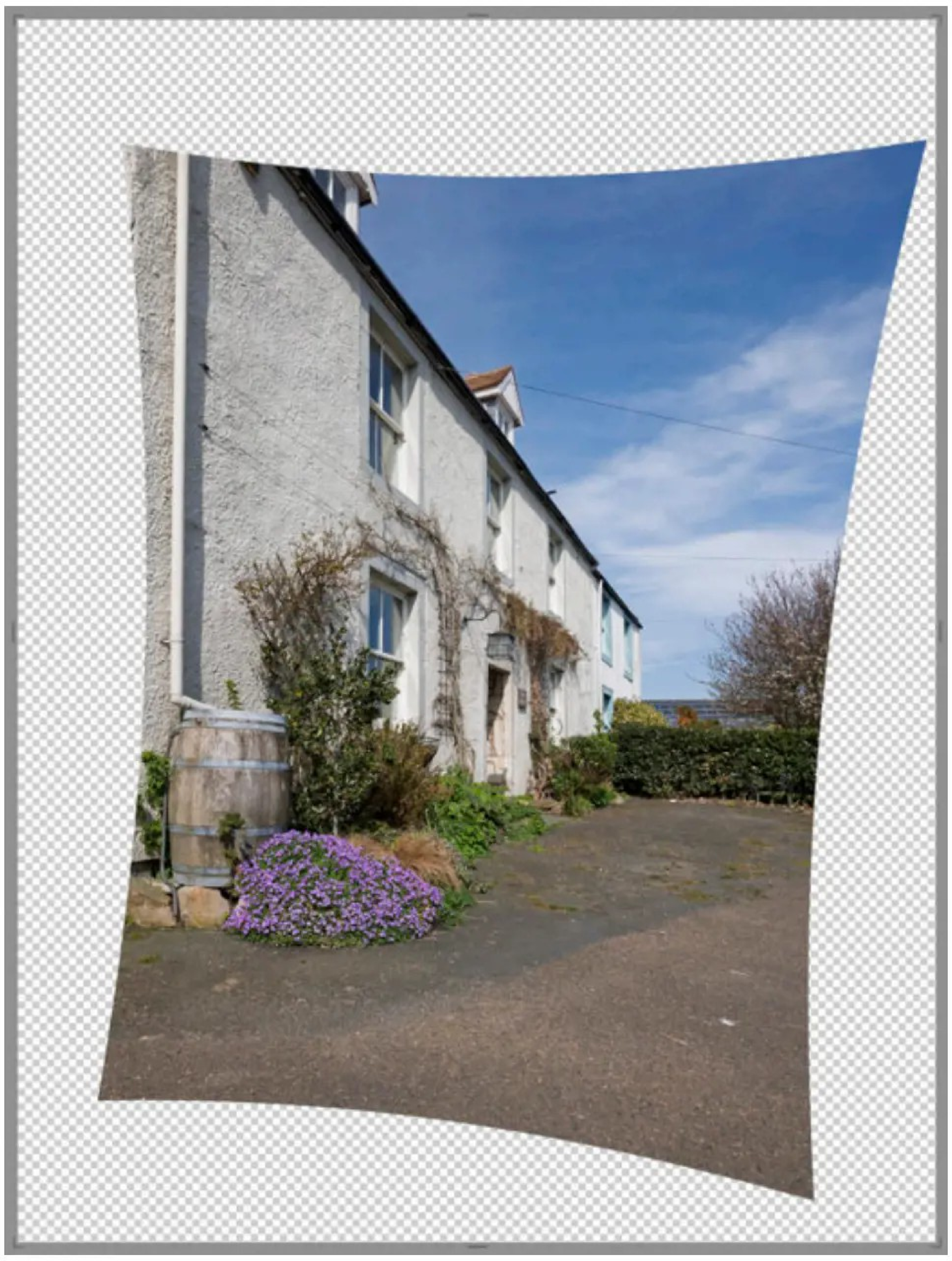
www.fujfilm.co.uk

WEX: **https://tidd.ly/4lSQtJd**

For this, I wanted the narrower 6552 x 11648 76 megapixel crop, but the widest angle was not enough to get the sky. Two frames panorama-stitched vertically in Photoshop created an 8645 x 13854 .DNG, 117 megapixels.



An attractive house in Lindisfarne village shows how well the GFX100RF full 35mm view can take architectural corrections, but also how much distortion this lens has, auto corrected by the built-in profile. The screen shot below maps the manipulation of the raw file with this profile plus +18 manual Adobe Camera Raw correction. Verticals and the horizon are also corrected using the crop and geometry palette. The final result above (a 94MP crop) is with the Velvia profile and a touch of added warmth, the screen shot shows the result of the Adaptive Colour profile and Strong tone curve. The extra canvas size (checkered transparency) was added to show the process.



by David Kilpatrick

Leica Q2 Monochrom

Black and white is the only option for this 48 megapixel rangefinder style camera with fixed 28mm lens

Any digital colour capture, whether raw or JPEG, can very easily be converted to black and white. The same does not apply to a monochrome sensor if you want colour. You are locked into your black-and-white result with no possibility of ever recovering a colour original.

Despite this many photographers including wedding shooters who might be expected to need colour to meet client expectations, still shoot Leica monochrome.

I tested the Q2 in September/ October 2022 and here I'm going to look at the Q2 Monochrom. It is fundamentally the same camera with similar 'zoom' functions that crop 35mm, 50mm and 75mm views from the 47.6 megapixel sensor. Of course this is not real zooming it is cropping but starting with a very high resolution original. Even the 75mm crop can make a large high-quality print.

One reason I One reason I wanted to try this camera was because of my experience with the Fujifilm X100VI. I set that camera to black-and-white partly to get a black-and-white viewfinder display which greatly aided composition. All the all files captured were in colour but I ended up using a great many in black-and-white and liked the results.

There is a second reason. I used to love shooting black-and-white on rangefinder Leica. Digital has never been quite the same, but maybe this camera could give me that experience back. Much would depend on how the sensor handled colour conversion to a monochrome tone curve.

Photographers like Ansel Adams and Minor White made adjustments to their exposure and development, and the contrast of printing paper, to get exactly the tones they wanted in the final print. Hopefully the Leica would have a built-in to curve which resembled exposing with a film like FP4 and making a print on Grade 2 to 3 paper.

SUMMILUX 1:1.7/28 ASPH.
MACRO
MONOCHROM

The Q2 Monochrom tried out came from Leica's excellent trial service, available from Leica Mayfair for pickup or by DPD Courier delivery and collection (UK). The kit including a Billingham bag came from the Leica Mayfair London store. As it happens I use exactly the same black Billingham, much older but not showing it, to carry my OM-Systems kit with OM-5, 12-45mm, 40-150mm, 60mm macro, 7.5mm Laowa and flash. It's a perfect fit for the Q2M with its neckstrap, spare battery and filters. Although the rear screen is not tiltable, it offers enough brightness and viewing angle to allow low or high level shots. The Macro function allows focus down to 17cm. The EVF is not especially high resolution, and is a regular colour OLED which can show the toned JPEG effect in sepia or other tints, and colour focus peaking which makes manual focus with magnification very accurate. The lowest resolution is the 75mm view crop, which gives a 7.3MP file, at full EVF scaling.

Post-panchromatic

Well, the answer is yes and no! Most classic black and white photography of the past was shot using panchromatic film. The very first photo processes only responded to light at the blue end of the spectrum. The first manufactured plates and films (as opposed to coating your own) had 'Ordinary' sensitivity which was much the same – they could be handled and processed in orange light. Improved Orthochromatic films responded to green and yellow light, and needed a deep red safelight for handling. Panchromatic or Isochromatic films extended sensitivity to reds and oranges to gradually improving degrees in the first half of the 1900s.

But it did not end there. Without any special labelling, new fast films gained some of their 400 speed (or more) from better red sensitivity. Then around 50 years ago makers like Ilford and Kodak acknowledged the change. 'Red pan' was here.

For Ilford, that was not enough. Red pan in the 'plus' versions of FP4 and HP5 gave a hint more gradation in blue skies, which had been stark white a century before and normally needed a 2X Yellow filter to look normal well into the 1980s. Ilford made SFX, an ISO 200 film which had near infrared sensitivity. Blue sky with white clouds looked natural without a filter. The downside was that if you did use a yellow or orange filter, it didn't have the strength of effect you were used to.

The first use of electronic sensing of light was in metering, not image capture. Colour sensitivity also affected this. The CdS (cadmium sulphide) cell was too sensitive to red, so fitting an orange or red filter and using the reading or auto exposure could result in underexposed negatives. Fuji Photo Film Co put the first Silicon Blue metering cells into SLRs – covering the faster reacting and innately more sensitive cell with a blue filter to cut out the red end of the spectrum. From the 1970s to now this has been standard. Similar fast responding semiconductors enabled digital imaging, and in the early days sensors were not just over-sensitive to red, they recorded unwanted infrared as well. Kodak, Leaf, Kaiser, Praktica (not a mistake!) and other pioneers of both scanning and instant-capture digital cameras and scanners of the 1990s made special filters which cut out IR and also balanced the response of RGB filtered sensors.

This even applied to monochrome digital cameras to prevent IR from interfering with natural greyscale rendering of colours and tones.

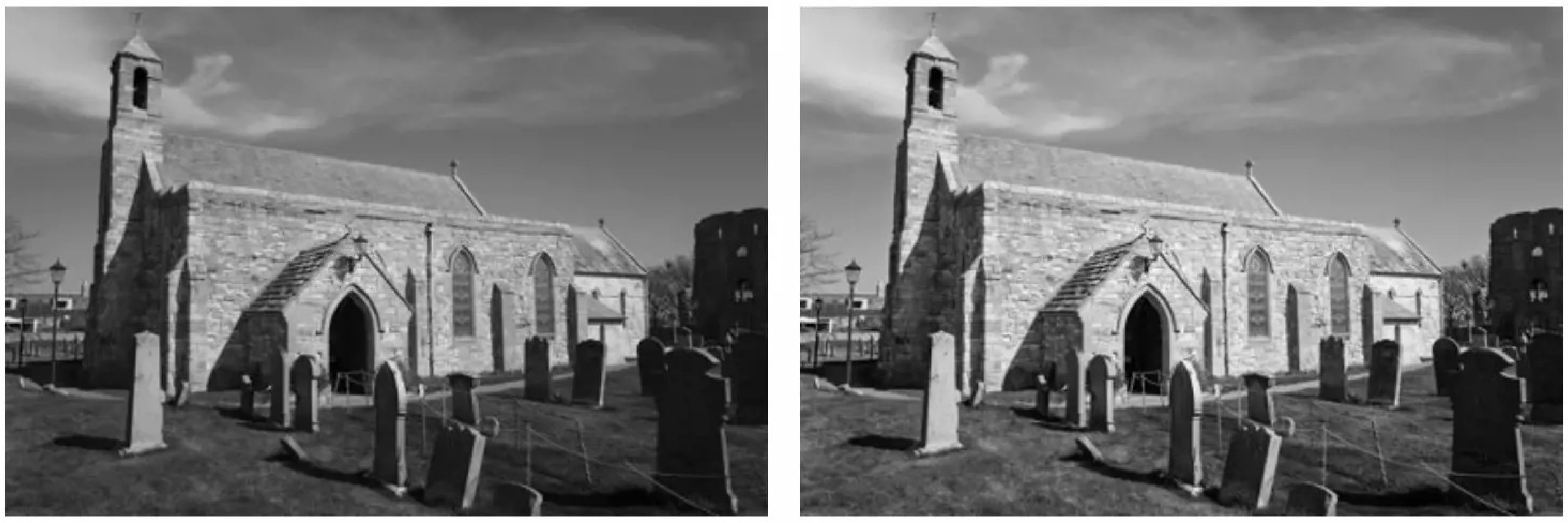
The Leica Q2M is many generations of sensor technology past that era – but it retains, under the cover glass of its otherwise unfiltered sensor, the same natural high sensitivity to the long end of visible light wavelengths.

It is very, very much like Ilford SFX!

Leica makes three contrast filters for the Monochrom – yellow, orange and green. The trial kit did not include these (they are £145 each!) but my cupboard offered Minolta AC multicoated 49mm filters Y52, O56 and G0 which are much the same. Indeed, at one time Minolta made filters for Leitz. Fortunately I also had an R60, as it didn't take long to establish that the red pan sensitivity of the Q2M means no filter is needed for an effect which looks like FP4+Y52. But the effect with a yellow filter is not all that different, orange produces what might have been yellow back in the day, and to get a decent shade into sunny day blue sky the red filter was best. Normally you'd never use a red filter routinely but with the Q2M I ended up either using no filter, or fitting R60.

The Q2's superb 28mm ƒ1.7 Summilux comes with a precision metal screw-in lens hood. Its re-entrant rectangular shape makes it impossible to change a filter with the hood on, an unexpected design flaw as the hood is not a rapid change bayonet type.

The only firm clue whether a filter was used on any shot was the exposure.



The Q2M when used even with a red filter does not give the same dramatic sky as a slow BW pan film. The left hand example above is a default ACR Monochrome output from an 8X Red (R60) filtered shot, ISO 200, 1/250s at ƒ4.5. The right hand version uses Adobe's Adaptive BW profile.

Used with no filter, the Q2M still records tones in a bright sky – Lindisfarne Trinity Church, Priory and Castle in perspective – ISO 200, 1/640s at ƒ8. Right, a 35mm lens view crop, with red filter, ISO 250, 1/50s at ƒ8.

Driving 60 miles to look for subjects, I get home and find this 100m from my door! No filter, ISO 200, 1/250s at ƒ16. The unusual diffraction-grating sunburst was only this strong at the smallest aperture, but present slightly at ƒ8.

Seeing in mono

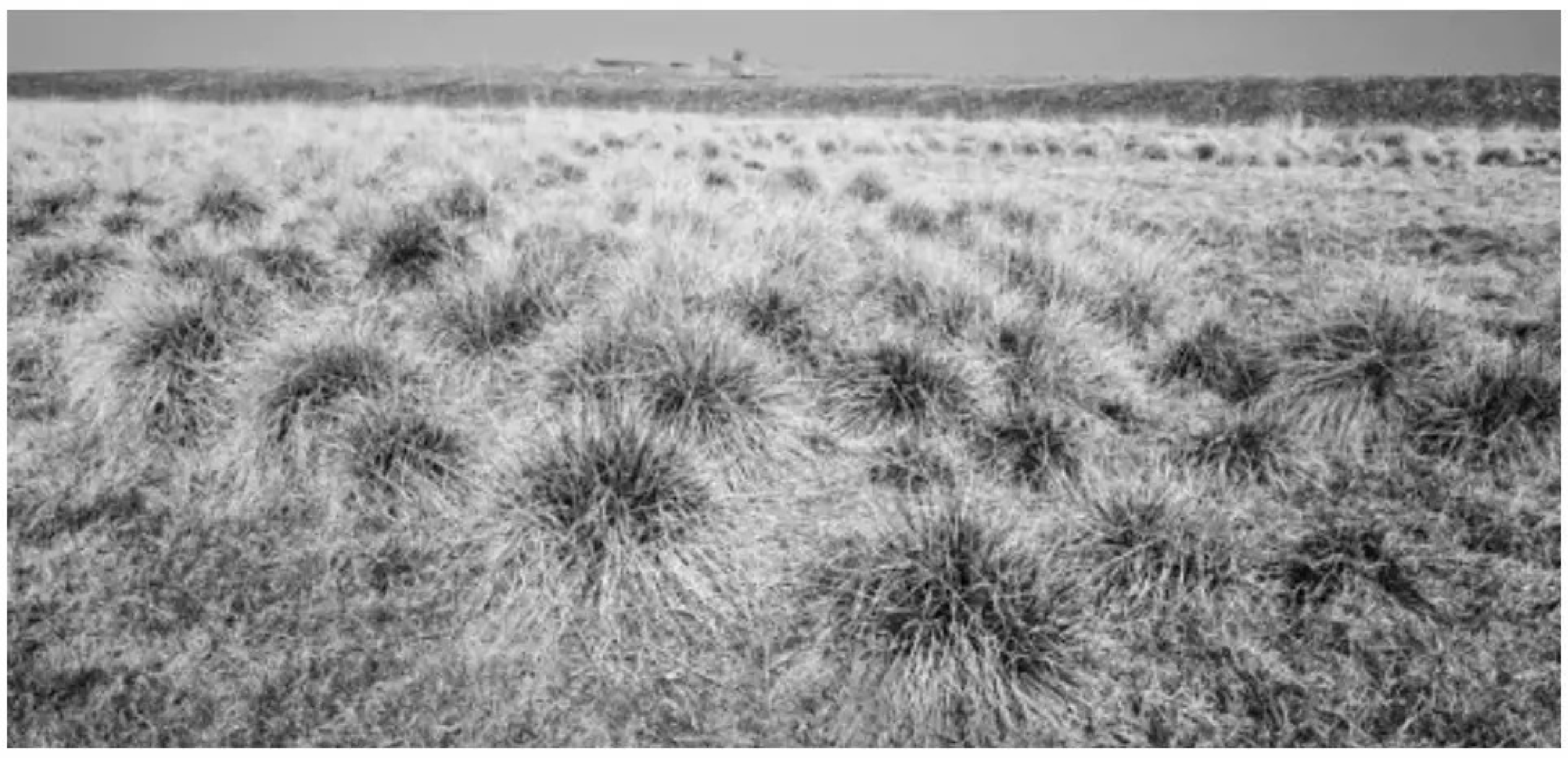
When using the Fujifilm GFX100RF I set JPEG capture to ACROS black and white, which gives a really good EVF display. By comparison the rather ordinary 3.7MP OLED EVF of the Leica is visually small and rather flat in contrast. This can be corrected by setting higher contrast for JPEG capture, with no effect on the raw .DNG file.

The native low contrast of the EVF emphasises how important luminance difference is in BW. It's easy to see when coloured objects which have plenty of contrast to the eye merge together in mono. A sandstone building against blue sky may just be two matching shades of grey. This is where the colour contrast filters come in.

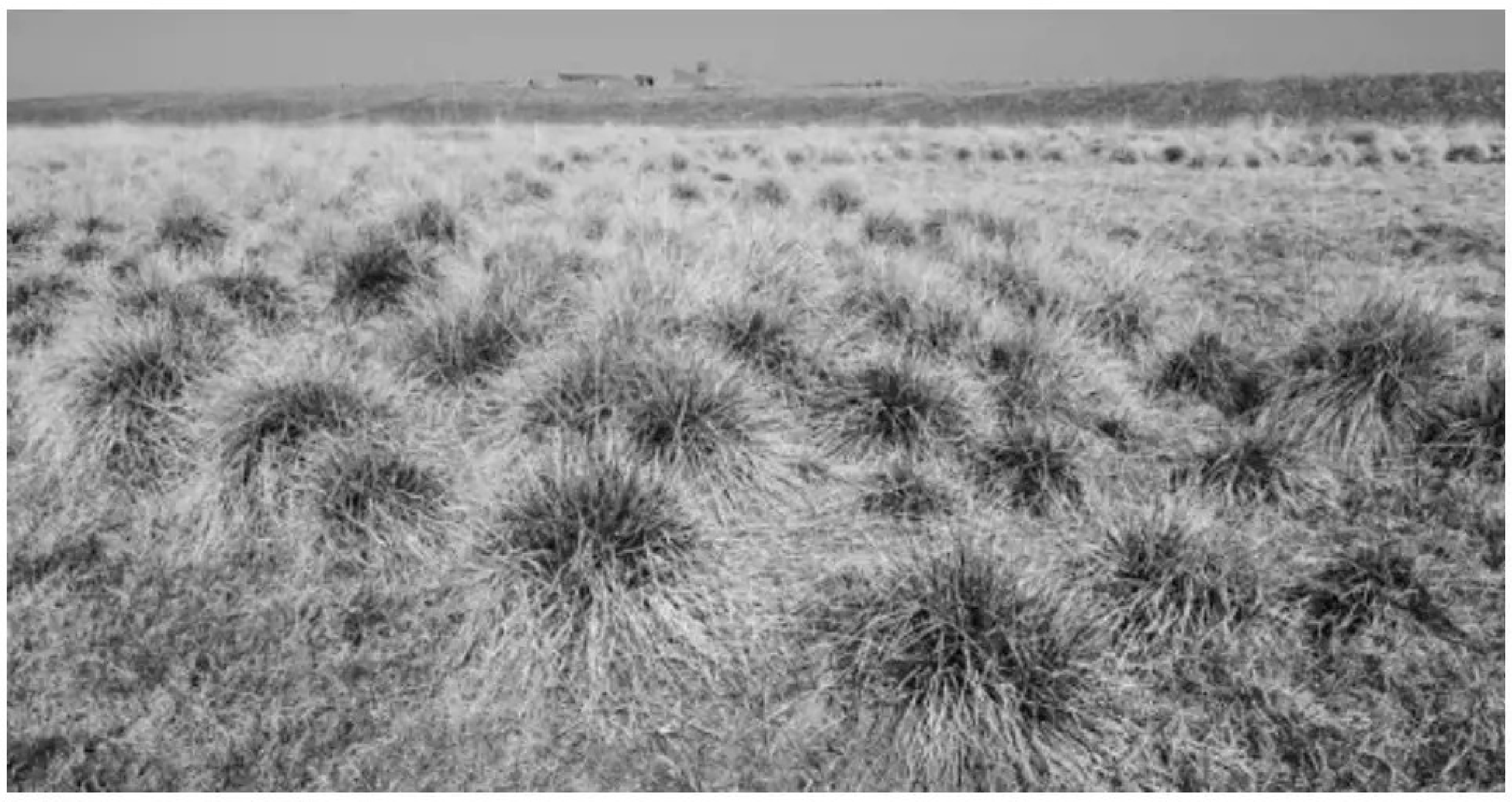
With a red filter, some foliage is lightened when you might expect the reverse. Spring and autumn leaves, moorland bent grass, marsh or dune grasses and meadow hay acquire detail contrast and lightness (see example). Mature deciduous trees in summer, and most conifers apart from larch and golden cypress, are darkened.

The sensor has a 13 EV range at ISO 200, with 14-bit greyscale capability. The default conversion on my system was set to Grayscale Gamma 2.2 8-bit. The 84MB .DNG files benefit from using 16-bit and the 46.7MP opened images are not huge compared to regular RGB 24-bit (3X 8-bit). 8-bit Grayscale JPEGs at Level 10 typically work out around 10-15MB indicating the level of detail captured.

Top: Lindisfarne boat shed, 1/640s at ƒ9, ISO 200, with Clarity at 30 for a slight acutance effect. Above, ISO 6400 in woodland on a sunny day, 1/50s at ƒ8.



Above, an 8X red filter effect used on the Q2M. Below, an RGB capture from the Fujifilm GFX100RF, processed using ACROS+R red filter effect from colour raw. Both use Strong curve and Clarity 30. The Q2M looks more authentic.



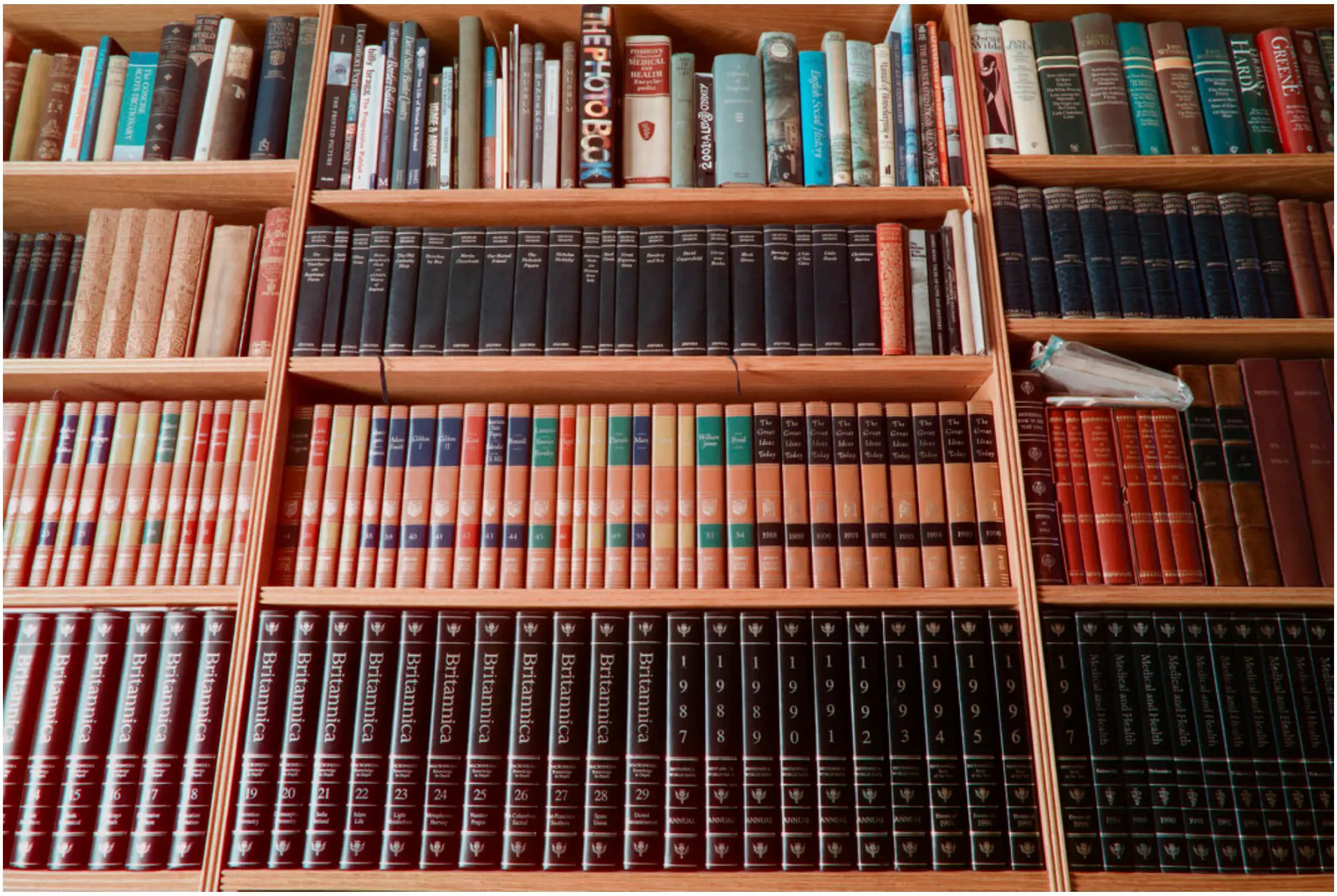
Grain and curve

The ISO range up to 100,000 is not likely to be used except the special purposes, as allowing Auto to set 6400 had little detrimental effect. The 'grain' is so fine at this resolution it never resembles 35mm film. With no sharpening, and a small amount of noise reduction, even 6400 looks like slow 35mm film. At ISO 100 or 200, it's better than using analogue film of this speed on 6 x 9cm. The natural result, whether default in-camera JPEG or default Adobe Monochrome process, resembles a Grade 2 print from a G=0.55 negative printed using a diffusing source – or even a cold cathode. It's almost as good as printing using that very diffused source from 5 x 4" though with a 28mm lens on the 35mm full frame there is never the look of large format. It's generally like the very best you could achieve from 35mm analogue, but missing both the grain signature and the vital acutance lines that make sharp high contrast boundaries pop out.

I'm sure there will be recipes to add grain and use unsharp masking or Clarity (a wide radius masking process) to give a more film-like look to Leica images from the Q2M, M10 and M11 Monochrom. A friend in Edinburgh who shoots mono has moved back to a Typ 246 24MP mono Leica M kit simply because that sensor gives results more akin (for him) to analogue film and print.

It helped to use the Medium Contrast curve in Adobe Camera Raw rather than Linear, with some shots using Strong Contrast. Some were improved using the Adobe *Adaptive BW* (a new AI function in the latest LR and ACR) rather than *Monochrome* profile.

The £5,300 Q2M has many other merits – 10fps, weatherproof magnesium alloy body, minimal shutter sound or silent up to 1/40,000s, flash synced to 1/500s, stunningly sharp lens. It's similar to the regular Q2 in these respects (reviewed in *Cameracraft* Sept/Oct 2022). Leica's test drive service was used and proved very efficient – **https://leica-camera.com/en-GB/test-drive-leica-q**.



An experiment with tricolour capture

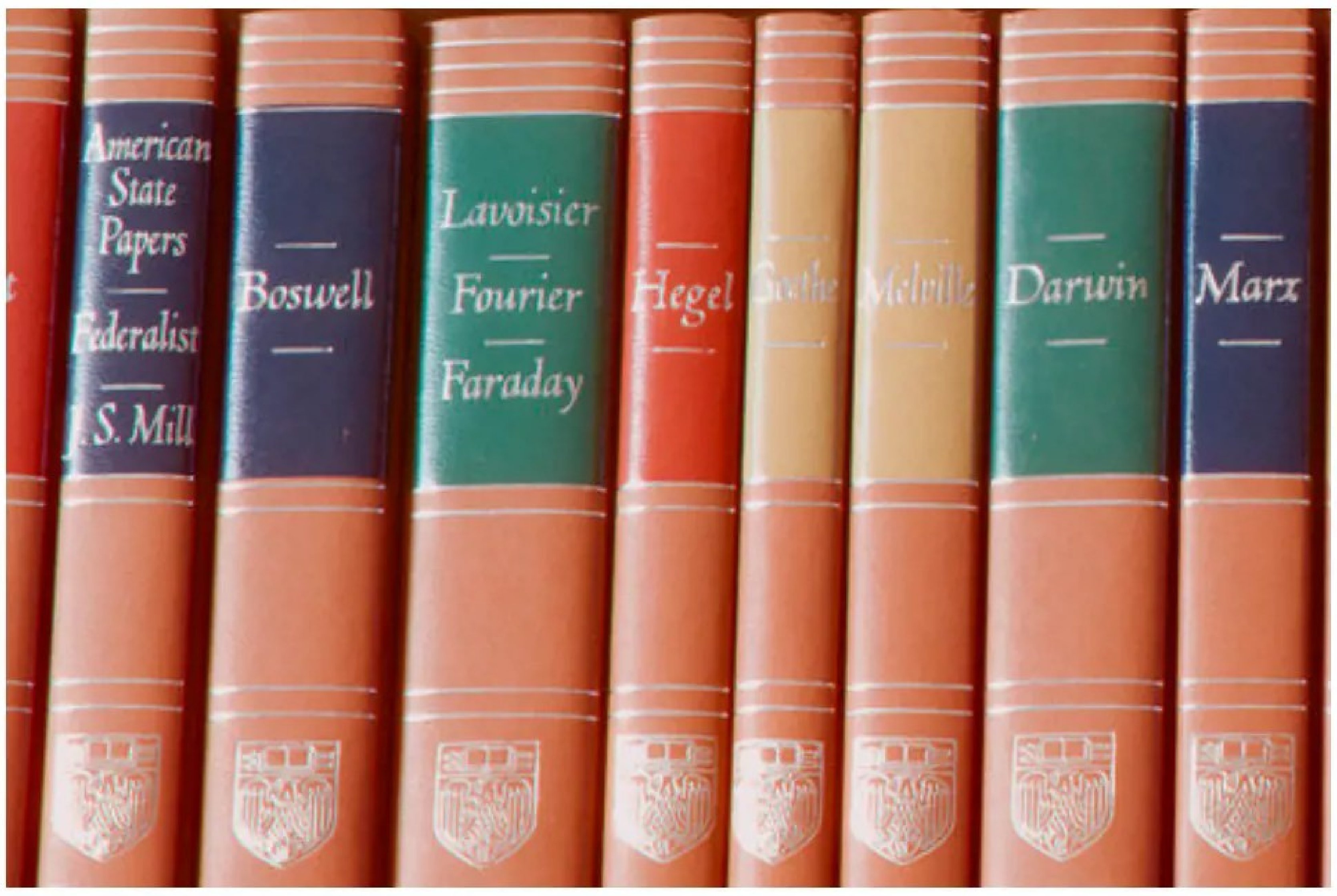
Although at some time in the past I've had a proper set of tricolour RGB filters – surprisingly dense colours – I wasn't able to find these or get any others during the weekend trial use of the Q2M.

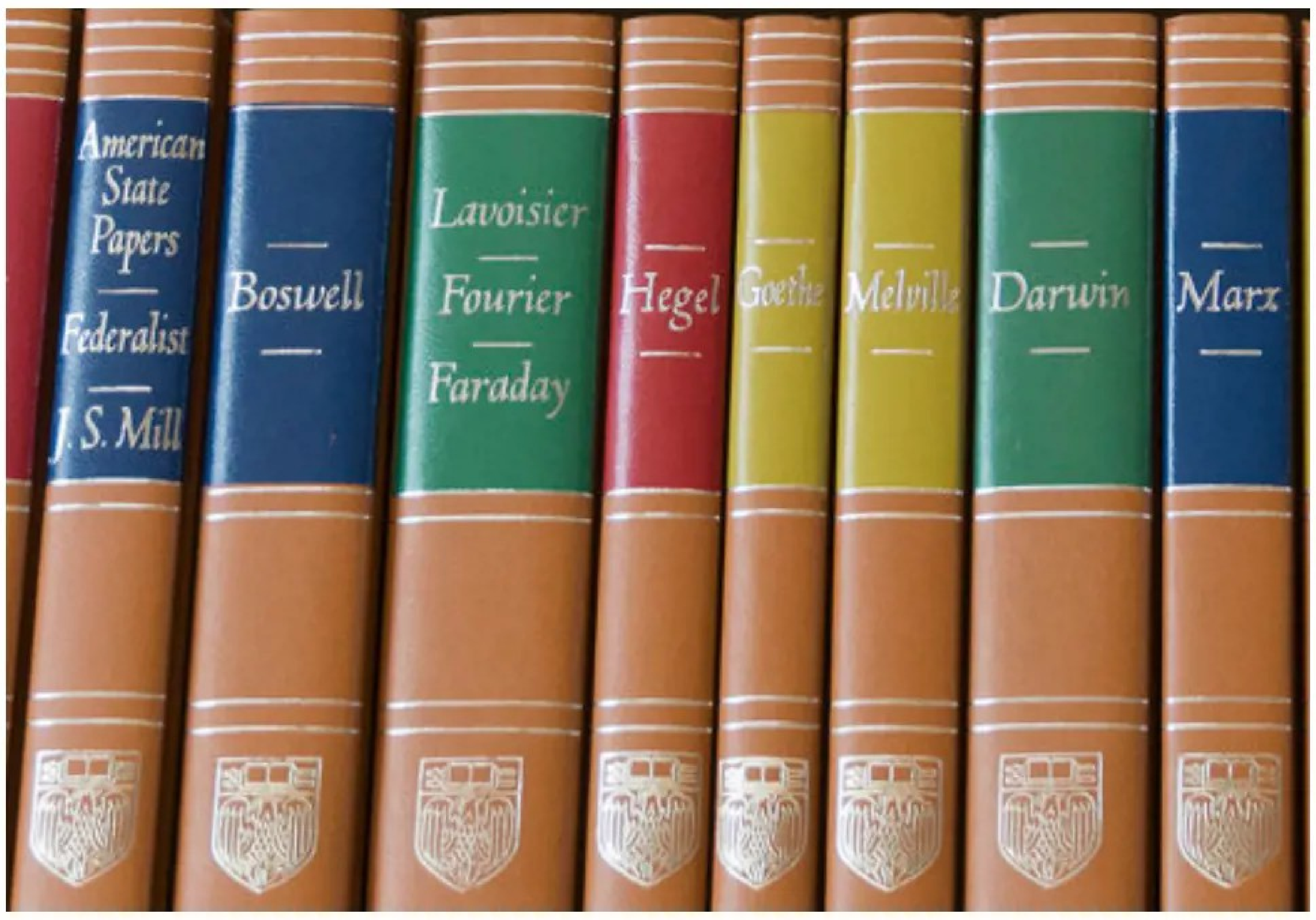
What I was able to do was determine that given a tripod, a static subject and constant lighting conditions it would be entirely possible to make Bayer-free true RGB files from three shots.

The difference between the sharpness and noise level of the Q2 monochrome files and any other capture is so great that this was a test I had to do despite odds against it. The result above bears some resemblance to early attempts at colour photography, or an incorrectly made three-shot from one of the dye transfer or emulsion lift processes of the mid-20th century.

To ensure the filters could be switched rapidly between three shots, the Leica Photos App on iPhone provided shake-free remote release. I held the filters not touching the camera in the other hand. I made tests using the only Red, Green and Blue filters I had – fine quality Minolta filters R60, G0 and 80B. The red filter would be good for tricolour shooting, but the green and blue are both very much lighter. I found an Elinchrom flash red filter foil just clean enough to be used in front of the lens, with about half the density of the R60.

Lacking adequate G and B 'cut', in assembled RGB from the greyscale files yellow was hardly present. To create an RGB file from three greyscales, first convert the Red filtered shot to RGB. Then using Channels in *Pho toshop*, open the other shots, select all and copy the greyscale Green to the G channel, the greyscale Blue to B, on the RGB converted from the Red filter shot. Using Hue and Saturation adjustment and the Camera Raw filter, tweak the colours and also the contrast curves of the channels and overall RGB. With correct tricolour RGB separation filters, the exceptional detail (trust me!) and total lack of noise at ISO 100 can in theory create colour reproduction better than anything you've ever seen. It's essential to use Manual focus on the Q2M as AF never matches shot to shot at pixel level. A classic Typ 246 (24MP) or M10 (40MP) rangefinder digital Leica might be better.

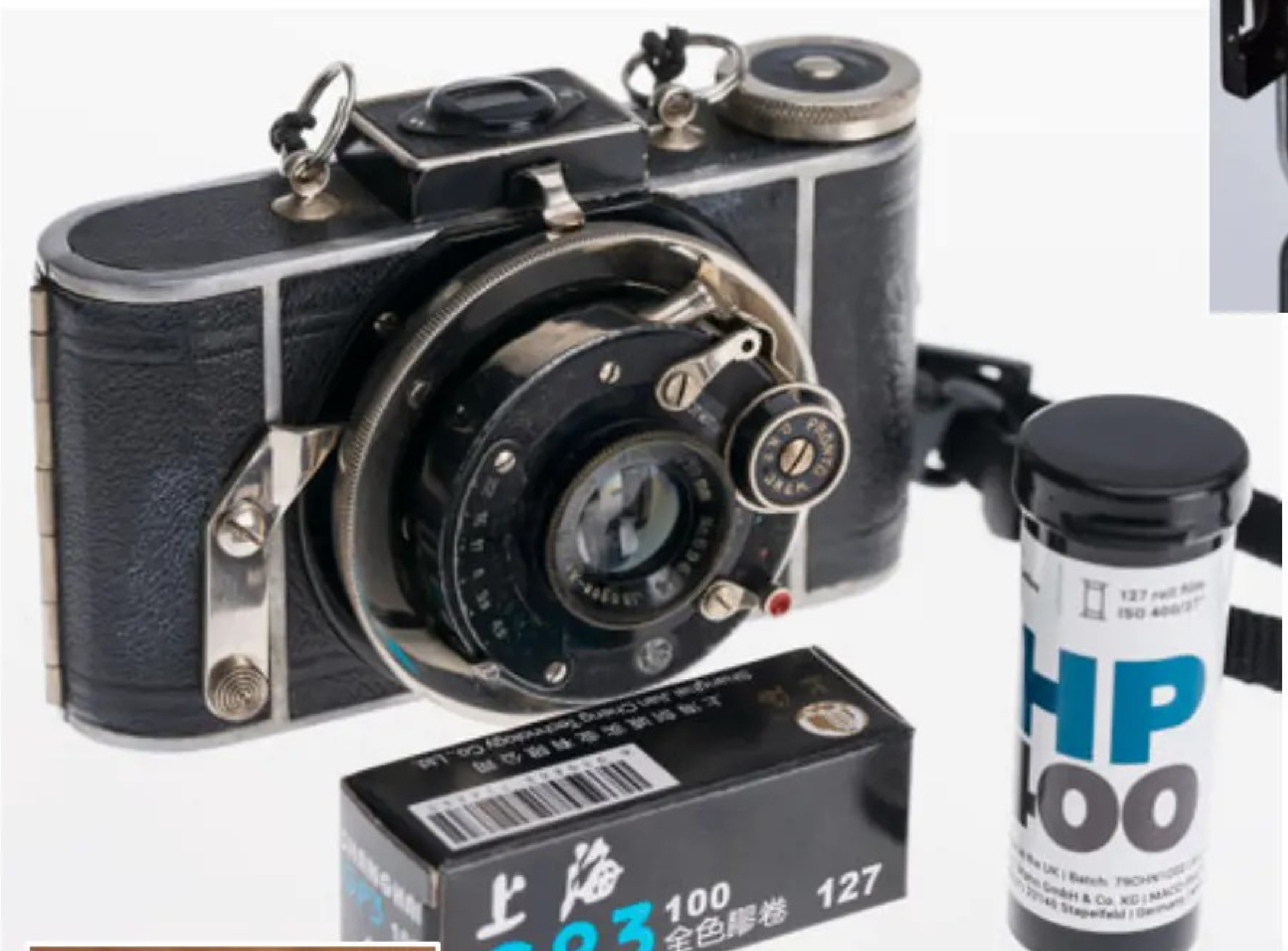




Top: the full experimental shot, by white blind diffused daylight. Centre: a detail at 300dpi. It's not really possible to show how clean this is on the page. Bottom, a shot taken with the Sony A7RV in the same conditions, processed using Adobe Standard colour profile, and very much what the eye sees.

Ihagee Parvola, the 1930s close focusing pocketable 4 x 6cm

The picture with films shows the camera as bought – the lens unit had been rotated! The correct alignment is below. Left, a neat arc-shaped swing out leg makes a support when no tripod is to hand.



IHAGEE
KAMERAWERK
STEENBERGEN & CO. DRESDEN

The Parvola was a finely designed and engineered camera, also sold with other lenses including an ƒ2 50mm Xenon (16-on) with Compur shutter from 1 to 1/300s. Note the top mounted strap lugs (the O-rings are mine). The double helicoid focusing on my antiques fair find is perfectly smooth and firm after 93 years. Left, daffodils as an against the light close-up at arm's length with the focusing set to minimum (less than 2ft). The well-blackened inside of the focusing tube has reflected stray light; I had no lens-hood for these shots.

You can scour auctions and used gear sales and never find any enlarger or film carrier made to fit one of the least practical film formats of the past, 8 on 127. It's one reason you may find the **Parvola**, originally made by Ihagee of Dresden as the 'Klein-Ultrix' in 1931, sells for a bit less than 120 or 35mm cameras of its day.

'Miniature' quickly became a term only used for 35mm film, but before the launch of the Leica 1 in 1925, anything less than a 120 rollfilm folder or a field camera with a rollfilm back was considered miniature. The standard formats for 120, 620 and even larger sizes like 116 were generally '8 on' the film, 6 x 9cm or larger, and the more economical 16-on formats were in the minority. Vest Pocket Kodak folders made cameras more portable, but this was mostly down to folding to a slim thickness.

In this design the 46mm wide 127 rollfilm helped, with its very skinny winding spindle and slim roll. 127 became the basis for 'Baby' rollfilm cameras including the 4 x 4cm Baby Rolleiflex after the later introduction of twin-lens reflexes.

The Ihagee Parvola was made in both 16-on and 8-on formats in the same body size, unlike the 16-on 127 Zeiss Ikon Kolibri I wrote about in March/April 2023. This only offered an almost 35mm-like 16-on 30 x 40mm. The Parvola 8-on gives 60 x 40mm. Ignore descriptions which say 6 x 4.5cm as it is not! The respective standard lenses, 50mm and 70mm, cover the same angles as 45mm and 42mm on 35mm film.

What the Parvola had in common with the Kolibri, made at the same time, was a bellows-free collapsible lens. Zeiss Ikon's solution was not unlike Leica's collapsible Elmar, with a metal tube. Ihagee opted for a double helical focusing barrel, which is a superb piece of engineering using brass and steel so the thread runs like butter over 90 years later.

First you turn the chromed focus ring to extend to a point where a sprung catch stops it. Pushing the catch lever towards the lens lets you rotated further, past an infinity stop, and then to a remarkable 2ft setting and closer. Such close focusing was rarely heard of when most lenses, even Leica's 50mm, could focus no closer than 1m or a slightly better 3ft.

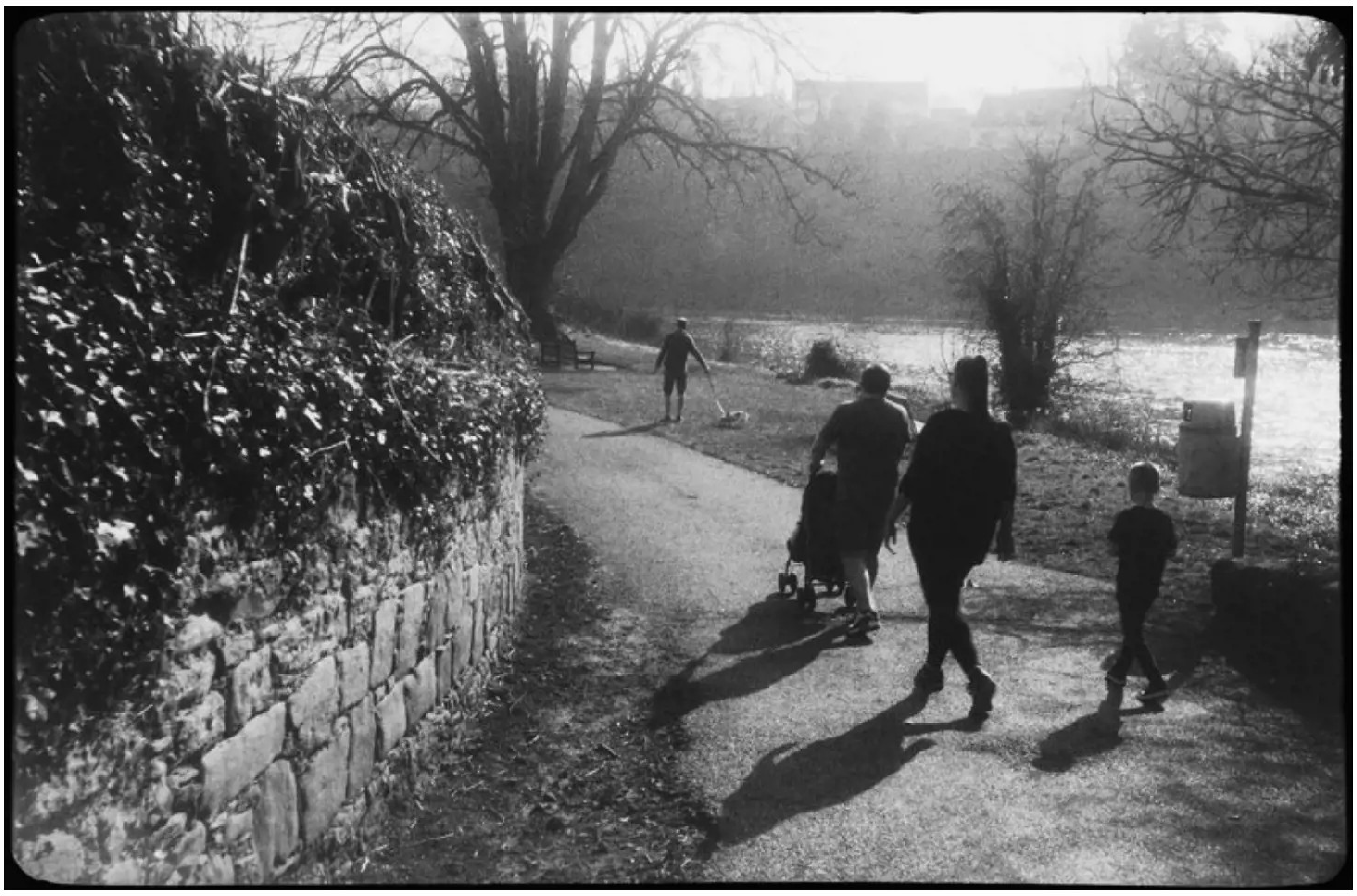
The camera has a fairly large two-lens inverted telescope folding viewfinder, inexplicably engraved with centring cross lines that are not visible with normal eyesight. No parallax marks are provided, and while the finder is centred on the horizontal dimension, it's far enough from the lens axis to put composition out by three inches at the closest focus. The 2ft range is actually far more useful than 1m, as this is roughly the reach of an outstretched arm and hand measured from your eye. It's far harder to focus accurately, with no rangefinder, at 1m or 3ft. What users in 1932 would have known – which we forget now – is that a 70mm lens focused at 2ft /60cm requires an aperture correction of half a stop. So setting ƒ16 as a sensible stop for a close-up subject in full sun would mean exposing at 1/25s not the 1/50s which might be expected with ISO 100 film. Then as now, this was a normal film sensitivity even though the ISO or earlier ASA scales were not used.

The Pronto 'ever-set' self-cocking dial set shutter on my example was the lowest cost option, similar to Zeiss's Telma, with speeds of 1/25s, 1/50s and 1/100s plus B and T. It's provided with a self-timer and a tapered cable release thread. The shutter release on the lens is a fiddly lever. The lens is a three-element Ihagee Anastigmat, not corrected for colour and not coated. The aperture scale on my example is in British/US units, from ƒ4.5 to ƒ22 via the familiar ƒ5.6, ƒ8 and so on and the focusing is in feet. Metric models with ƒ6.3, ƒ9, ƒ18 were also made and lens options included an ƒ3.5 70mm and a Meyer Makro-Plasmat 50mm ƒ2.7 (16-on).

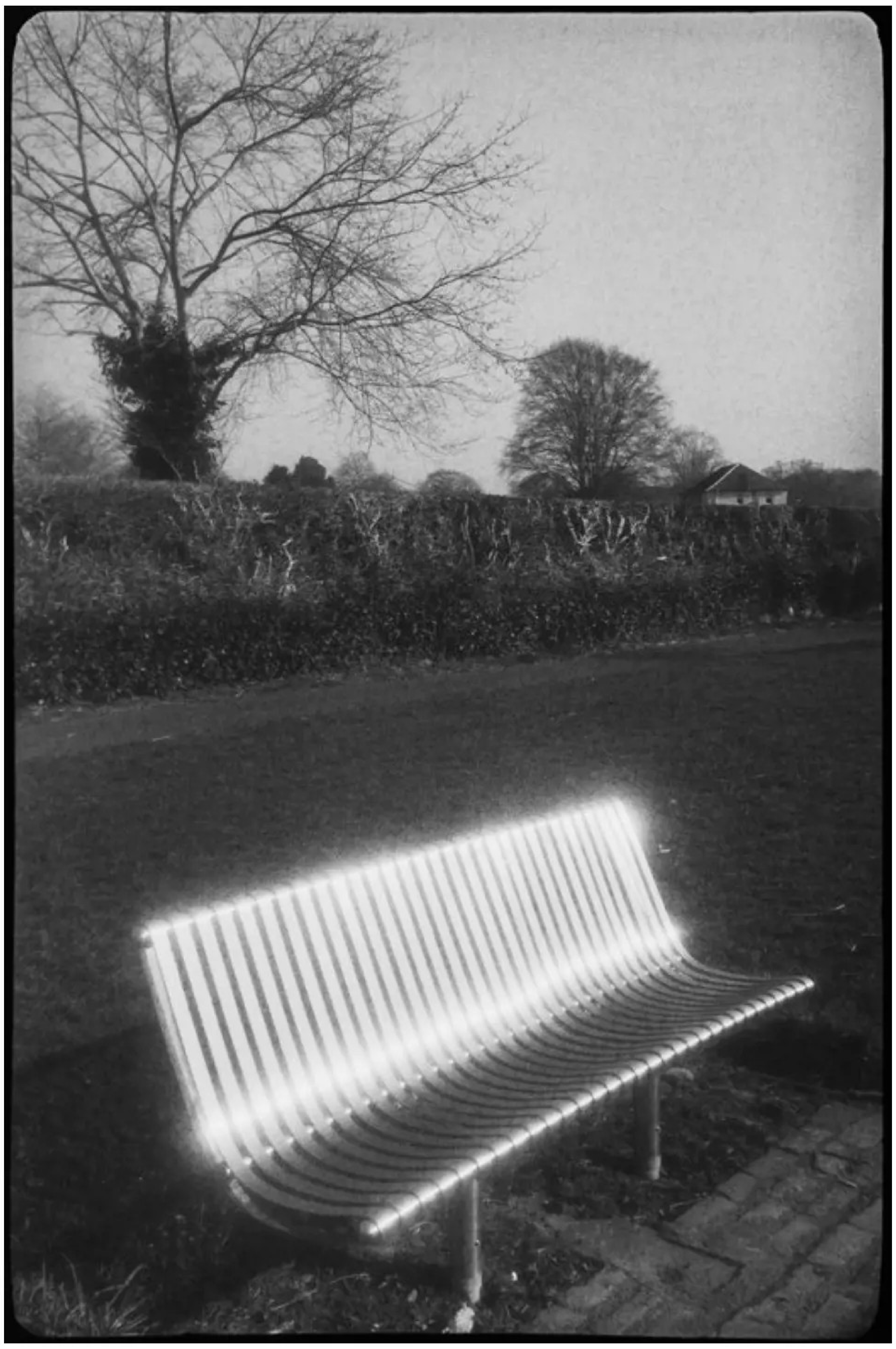
The camera is extremely well made and has lasted with minimal wear. The metal 127 take up spool found in it looked brand new, but some marks round the orange 'safelight' window for film advance showed this has been covered with tape as necessary to prevent light ruining panchromatic or colour films. I used my preferred very low tack Sylglass opaque bitumen flashing as an easily lifted cover.

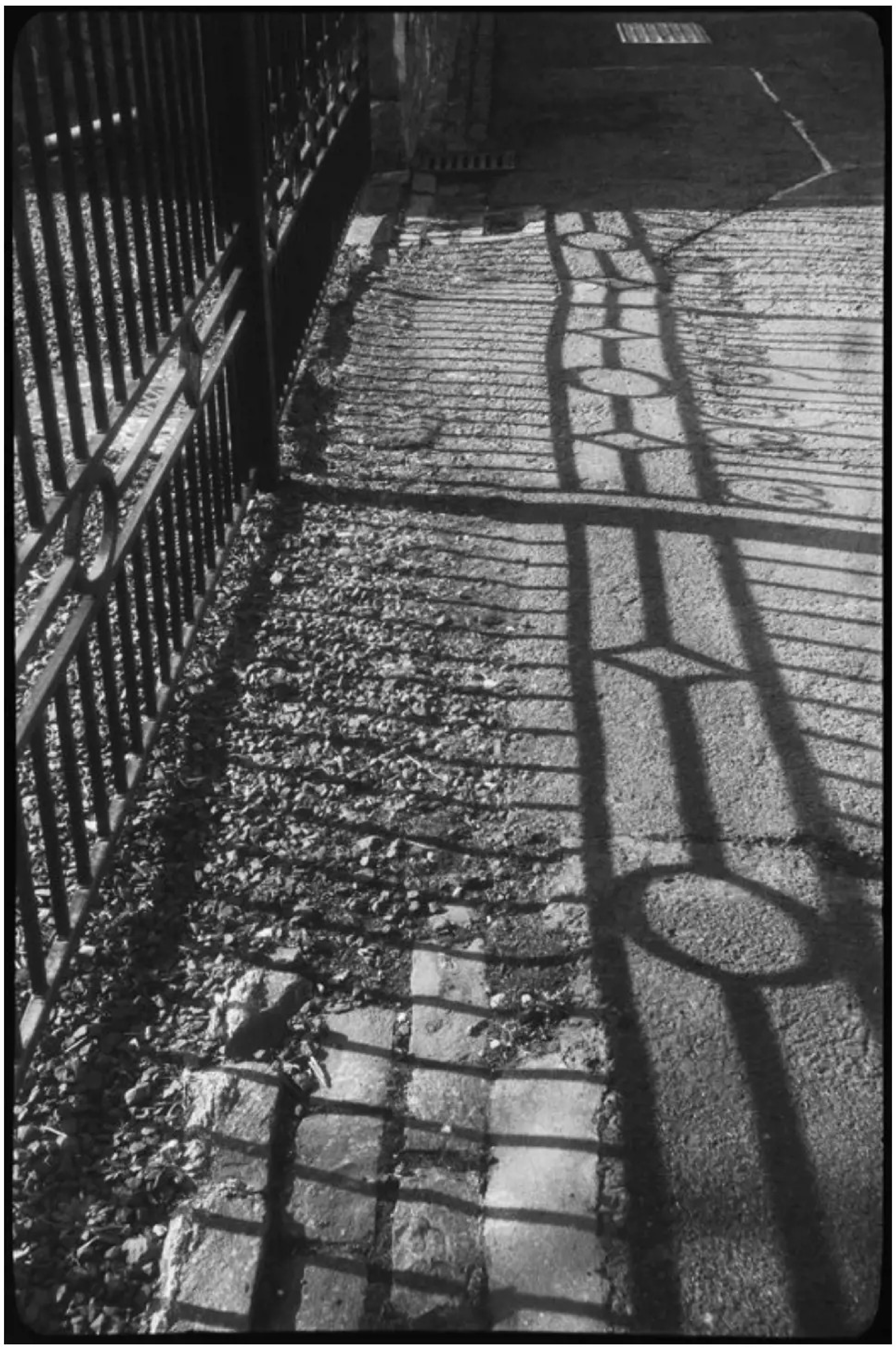
As for BW films, 127 is hard to get and fairly expensive. I found a choice between Chinese made Shanghai GP3 ISO 100, and British *(Harman, equals Kentmere)* Maco HP 400 . One roll of each with postage from Bristol Cameras cost almost £30. Fortunately, I had very long-lasting Adox FX39 developer and Tetenal Superfix already to hand. I decided to do a purely BW test, unlike the Kolibri where I used

The Chinese GP3 film had countless strange clusters of emulsion flaws like scrapes and pinholes. Most of the shots were not usable!



Shooting in black and white on an older camera calls for seeing contrast not colour. All examples are from the eight exposures of Maco HP 400. Above, checking lens flare – not bad for uncoated, 1/100s at ƒ16. Left, pre-focused at 20ft and composed to wait for the best moment, again 1/100s at ƒ16. Below left, blinding sun off a stainless steel bench seat – 1/100s at ƒ22. Below, my first exposure, 1/100s at ƒ16 with as much care in composition as the simple optical finder allowed. Focused by estimation on the first diamond shadow. Film fog level above base was high.





C41 negative film. 127 is not easy the load in to a dev tank but it's how I started 60 years ago and not forgotten! The GP3 was processed first and I thought I must have dropped the film and stepped on it though I knew I had not. It emerged with violent scratches and pinholes! Using the same dev technique, the HP 400 had no such problems. It proved surprisingly grainy but otherwise perfect. It's not worth saving £3 on the imported Shanghai film. My camera scans were made using a 6 x 7cm carrier and the black borders show the entire frame. As a veteran of monochrome, I chose subjects which even in the 1930s would have worked well – shadows, contre-jour, effects of light and shade. The lens is not flare-free of course but considering the challenges of some targets it did well. You do need to change your 'seeing' mode when trying an old camera with film like this.

The Parvola cost relatively little at a local fleamarket event and as a camera never on my radar, I was delighted to find it. Examples on eBay sell from around £35 up. The rarer lenses make a big difference – up to 100X the price!

– *David Kilpatrick*

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